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A planning document for people with disabilities who want to volunteer



This document is broken into steps to make it easy. Start at the step that suits you. If you're new to volunteering, begin with 'Getting started'.

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★ Getting Started

Everyone has the right to contribute to their community through volunteering. Here are some of the reasons people like to volunteer:

- To feel more connected to their community
- To gain new experiences
- To fill in their days whilst they look for paid work
- To support a cause or issue that they are passionate about

Volunteer organisations help people contribute to their community in meaningful ways. This happens best when volunteer organisations work with us as people with disabilities. This makes sure nobody gets left out or left behind.

It's not always easy to start something new, so this planning document aims to help you take the first steps to get involved in volunteering.

How do I use this planning document? ★

This planning document steps you through:

- 1** The type of volunteering you may want to do.
- 2** How to find the right organisation or group to volunteer with.
- 3** How to work with organisations and groups to shape the volunteering role for you.

You can use the spaces provided in this document to put down your views, thoughts and questions.

Do I want someone to support me with this plan? ★

You may be comfortable completing this plan by yourself, or you may want to have someone you trust work with you to complete the steps in this plan.

A good person to help might be a support person, friend, or family member.



Question 1. Do I want someone to support me with this plan?

- Yes, I would like support
- No, I can complete this myself

If I want someone to support me, who could that be?

This is a space where you can put down your views, thoughts or questions.



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1 What kind of volunteering do I want to do? ★

People volunteer for lots of different reasons. Understanding what you want to do and the skills you have can be a great way to find a volunteer role that will feel meaningful to you.

This section can help you figure out:

- What volunteering is
- Your reasons for volunteering
- What your strengths are and what you enjoy
- Skills and experiences that you have had that may be of benefit in volunteering

What is volunteering?★

Volunteering is time a person chooses to provide for a community, which will help others, without being paid for it.

There are two kinds of volunteering:

1 **Formal volunteering** with an organisation, which is structured and planned.

2 **Informal volunteering** is casually helping the people around you. A lot of people do informal volunteering and don't realise it! Informal volunteering might involve things like helping neighbours or collecting rubbish around where you live.



Most of this guide relates to formal volunteering.

If you want to learn more, this is a great short video by a group called Volunteerability, about what is and isn't volunteering.

To watch the video titled "What is volunteering?" scan the QR code or visit this link:

<https://youtu.be/YaDEYvJzEYE>



Question 2. Have you volunteered before?

This is a space where you can put down your views, thoughts or questions.

Why do you want to volunteer? ★

People volunteer for lots of different reasons.

You might have one reason, or many. Some reasons might be:

- To be more involved in your community
- To increase your confidence and make new friends
- To make a difference to a cause you support
- To improve your health and wellbeing
- To share your knowledge and skills with others
- To develop or demonstrate skills for the workplace
- To try something new and have some fun!



Question 3. Why do you want to volunteer?

This is a space where you can put down your views, thoughts or questions.

If you want to know more about why people volunteer you can watch these videos:



This video shows Justine talking about why she first started volunteering.

Scan the QR code or visit this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=miCBFrL8uDI>



This video shows Corey talking about how volunteering as an umpire helps him have fun and keep busy.

Scan the QR code or visit this link:

<https://youtu.be/1Im4KWGfozg>

What are your interests, , and what do you enjoy doing?

Finding a volunteer role that relates to something you care about, enjoy, or are good at can help make volunteering a more meaningful experience.



Question 4: What are your interests, and what do you enjoy doing? (for example, the environment, animals, gaming, or dancing).

This is a space where you can put down your views, thoughts or questions.

What are my strengths and skills?

We all have something unique to offer our community, and volunteering can be a great place to use your strengths and skills.



If you want to find out more about someone using their unique skills whilst volunteering this video may help. It shows Dee talking about the skills she used.

Scan the QR code or visit this link:

<https://youtu.be/IxemAYE-7Y4>

Transferable skills are skills that you have that can be used in lots of different situations. You may have many transferable skills that you use in your everyday life, but it is easy to forget that they may have benefits to others.



Here is a list of things you might do day-to-day and how they could be considered valuable transferable skills.

	Examples of skills	Life examples of these skills – Tick all that apply to you
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Teamwork	Working with others to achieve a group goal.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Problem Solving	Adapting to change and finding other solutions when things don't go to plan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Flexibility	Adapting to external needs, for example, changing your routine to be at a regular appointment.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Persistence	Pushing through when things are uncertain, confusing or hard.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strong work ethic	Concentrating on completing activities in a focused way.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Time management	Scheduling your time to make sure you get your tasks done on time. For example, getting to places and appointments on time.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Research and analytics	Investigating a topic to find out more about it by searching the internet, communicating with others or reading about it.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Administration	Answering phones, replying to emails with information, helping others to manage appointments, or sorting collections or paperwork into a system.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Financial management	Managing money, helping with fundraising, and keeping records of spending.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Promotion	Promoting a cause, a service, or a product to others.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lived experience	Knowledge and understanding from your personal history, circumstances, and experiences.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Creative thinking	Thinking about ideas to help solve an issue you or someone else has faced.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Technical and digital literacy	Using computers, phones, and other technology (like apps) to achieve goals.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Listening	Interpreting and understanding directions from others.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Social media literacy	Actively using social networking sites like YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Facebook.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Working with animals	Caring for your own or others' pets or being involved with farm animal care.



Question 5. What are your skills?

This is a space where you can put down your views, thoughts or questions.



Question 6. Have you completed training, education, work, or any other experiences that might be helpful for volunteering?

This is a space where you can put down your views, thoughts or questions.



Question 7. Based on thinking about your skills, interests and experiences do you have any ideas about where you could volunteer? It is OK if you don't have any ideas yet; the next sections are here to help you further.

This is a space where you can put down your views, thoughts or questions.



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2 How do I find the right organisation or group for me? ★

This section will help you find out more about:

- What makes an organisation a good fit for you.
- Where can you find organisations or groups that might have meaningful opportunities for you.
- What is involved in approaching an organisation or group that you would like to volunteer for.

What makes an organisation more likely to be a good place to volunteer?

It can take a lot of time to find the right volunteer role. Here are our top tips for finding organisations that may have good roles for you before going to too much effort.

Find organisations that:

- 1** Feel good when you visit their location or participate in their programs.
- 2** Have accessible information on their website or role advertisement.
- 3** Are comfortable co-planning with you instead of making assumptions about what you need to excel in a volunteering role.
- 4** Are flexible about what activities are essential to any volunteer role and are open to different ways of working.



Where can I find volunteer roles? ★

Where do I start?


If you want to learn more about volunteering, there are local organisations that can help. Their contact details are below:



If you live in Victoria

Volunteering Victoria:

 <https://www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au>

 Telephone: (03) 9052 4524

 Email: info@volunteeringvictoria.org.au



If you live outside of Victoria

Volunteering Australia:

 <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org>

 Telephone: (02) 6189 4921

 Email: hello@volunteeringaustralia.org



Other local Volunteer Resource Centres in Victoria

For all areas in Victoria, you can find your closest volunteer support service through the **Volunteering Victoria** website.

Scan the QR code or visit this link:

<https://www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au/for-volunteers/volunteer-support-in-your-region>

Where do groups and organisations advertise for volunteers? ★

Formal volunteer roles are often posted online. Some websites that provide lots of roles for volunteers across Australia include:

🔍 <https://govolunteer.com.au>

🔍 <https://www.volunteer.com.au>

For organisations and groups in your local area, check local newspapers and newsletters, or connect with your local community centre, council, Neighbourhood House, or library to find out whether they are aware of local volunteer opportunities.



How can I find volunteer opportunities that are not advertised? ★

Just because a place hasn't advertised for volunteers, it doesn't mean they don't want them. Sometimes people approach a group or a community to express interest in volunteering with them rather than waiting to be asked.

Here are our best tips in finding volunteer opportunities that aren't advertised:

- 1** If you are already involved with a community group or an organisation that supports a cause you are passionate about, ask them how you can volunteer.
- 2** If you have a special skill, interest, or hobby, your local community center or council might like you to share it with other people.
- 3** Ask your friends, neighbours, and family where they volunteer. You might like to join them.
- 4** Wherever you spend a lot of time, maybe at a cafe or community center, you can ask them.



Question 8. What volunteer opportunities are you interested in and would like to investigate further?

This is a space where you can put down your views, thoughts or questions.



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3

How do I work with an ★ organisation or group to shape the volunteer opportunity for me?

When decisions and plans need to be made about your volunteering, you are the person most impacted, and you know what is best for you. It's common sense that you should be at the center of the planning.

People with disabilities are often left out of the decision making and planning process. That is unfair and leads to poorer outcomes for everyone.

When we **co-plan** volunteer opportunities, we can create plans based on our skills, experience, and strengths. That way, we can create volunteer positions that work for all of us, not just some of us.

Where do I start? ★

The first step is to approach the organisation or group that you want to volunteer with. This may be by providing a response to an advertised volunteer position or approaching an organisation directly.

Here is a statement you can provide for a potential organisation or group:

“

“I think I have something to offer your organisation as a volunteer, and I would love the opportunity to co-plan how we could make this happen.”

”

What does co-planning a volunteer opportunity look like? ★

Co-planning conversations involve a two-way conversation between you as the individual who wishes to volunteer, and the organisation or group you want to volunteer with. It can be held face-to-face, online, or via telephone. It may require both you and the organisation to take time after the discussion to review the next steps and consider if you both want to go forward.

Who is involved in co-planning?

It will involve you and at least one person from the volunteer organisation. You can also bring a support person like a family member, carer, or support worker.

How can I prepare?

- You can visit the location of the volunteer role to understand what you might need to get the most out of the experience. For example, if it's a loud environment, you might decide you need headphones.
- You can fill out this planning resource before any discussion with a group or organisation, so you have the information about your interests, experience, and strengths with you.

What might be involved in a co-planning conversation?

There are lots of things you can talk about, but here are some ideas:

- How you communicate best
- How often you want to be there
- What your role will involve
- Whether it is possible for a trial period, to “test out” the role and see if you like it
- Whether you want to bring a family member, support person, or carer with you, either temporarily at the beginning or on a regular volunteering basis
- Answering any questions you have
- What are the next steps or timelines, if the volunteer role is right for you.

It may help to think about what you want and need to feel comfortable to volunteer before you have a co-planning conversation. This allows you to be more prepared.

The two questions below can help you to prepare for the co-planning conversation.





Question 9. What do you want to tell the organisation about you and what you want to get out of volunteering?

This is a space where you can put down your views, thoughts or questions.



Question 10. What do you need to feel comfortable volunteering?

This is a space where you can put down your views, thoughts or questions.

Top Tips for co-planning conversations

Here are our top tips for getting the most out of co-planning conversations.

- 1** You are legally allowed to have someone support you in the conversation if you want.
- 2** Share information about your strengths and interests, and your wants and needs.
- 3** If in doubt about anything, it is OK to ask for clarification or ask people to repeat what they have communicated to you.
- 4** You do not have to disclose your disability if you do not want to.
- 5** It is more than ok if you decide that, after having the discussion, you do not want to volunteer with this group.

What happens next? ★

After having a conversation with an organisation or group, it is up to you and the organisation whether to progress from potentially volunteering to becoming a volunteer.

Think about the experience you had in the conversation and the idea of potentially volunteering there. You could feel comfortable, excited, disheartened or not bothered. All feelings are valid.



Question 11: Now that you have met with the organisation or group, how do you feel about the volunteer opportunity?

This is a space where you can put down your views, thoughts or questions.



Question 12: Do you have any other questions before you start volunteering?

This is a space where you can put down your views, thoughts or questions.

How do I progress from co-planning to volunteering? ★

If you and the organisation or group want to progress, then the next step is to try out the volunteering experience first or move directly to becoming a volunteer.



Scan the QR code or follow this link to read about what's involved before you start volunteering:

<https://volunteerability.com.au/i-want-to-volunteer/what-do-i-need-to-start-volunteering/>



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work and live. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We recognise, celebrate and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the First Australians. We acknowledge their unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land and waters, as we strive for equality and safety in community services and health care.

STATEMENT OF DIVERSITY

Omnia Community Health is committed to improving the health of our community and being accessible to all, including people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, those from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background, people with a disability, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer people and other socially vulnerable groups and supporting their communities across the lifespan from birth to older age.

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