

ABILITIES INC



CLIENT HANDBOOK





WELCOME!

We hope that your experience with us is one of growth and fulfillment. We want you to know that we are here to help you become the productive, responsible, and valued person you want to be. We are dedicated to helping you to develop the skills you need to become independent in both living and community settings. Together, we want to help you teach your community to look at your ABILITIES.

Sincerely,

**George Taylor, President/Director
Abilities Inc.**



RULES TO FOLLOW

While you are receiving services from Abilities Inc., there will be certain rules to follow.

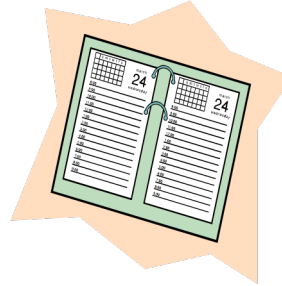
- 1. Always dress neatly. Hair must always be combed, and you must have on proper clothing such as clean shirt, pants, underwear, shoes that are closed toe if you are working, and socks. There must be no body odor! Ladies' shorts and skirts can not be shorter than 2 inches above their knee. Ladies can not wear strapless shirts, or shirts with spaghetti straps, or shirts that are tight. Failure to follow dress code will result in you being asked leave and make the needed corrections to your attire. You may not return until the corrections are made.**



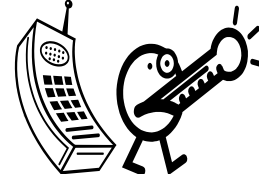
- 2. No Tobacco, Alcohol, or Drugs! If you are taking medications...they must be approved by your doctor. You can not be under the influence of Alcohol or Illegal Drugs. Failure to follow this rule will result in you being asked to leave the premises. You may be asked to submit to a drug test prior to being allowed to return.**



- 3. All appointments such as doctor, hair, dental, must be scheduled after your hours with our agency are over...unless they are part of your goals.**



- 4. Your services are important and have been ordered for you as part of your treatment. If you are too sick to receive services on a particular day, please call one of the numbers listed below and let us know. Remember!!! It is YOUR responsibility to call us and let us know!!! Failure to comply with your prescribed treatment schedule will not allow you to accomplish your goals. Once a pattern has been noted in your absences, the team will meet with you to discuss your future treatment with the agency.**



252-526-1350 (leave voice message or send text)

252-939-9944

252-268-8700 (leave voice message or send text)

YOUR TREATMENT PLAN

Once you have met with our staff, and we have qualified you to receive services from our agency, then our Qualified Professional will meet with you and anyone you would like to have with you, to determine what type of supports you feel you need. These supports will always be the least supports you need to assist you in being as independent as possible. During this meeting, you will help us determine where you want your services to be at in your community, any jobs you may be interested in, and you will also help us identify who will be your support worker. As always, you are free to have anyone attend your meeting, and any other appointments to help you with understanding and assisting you in asking any questions you may have. If there is any time you would like to make changes to the services you receive, you may do so by contacting your support staff or contacting the office. If we feel that you are not qualified to receive the services that we offer, we will work very hard to help you locate the supports that you need, by referring you to another program in your area that may be able to help. If at any time during your services, you or your guardian wish to explore services from a different agency, please let us know, and we will be happy to assist you in finding other service providers.

If you qualify to receive services that are a part of the North Carolina Innovations Waiver, then we will meet with you, and your Care Coordinator to support you in deciding what type of goals and outcomes you feel you need supports in.



If it is a service that is funded by the State, or otherwise called IPRS services, then you will only meet with our Qualified Professional to determine those goals. Whether it be an Innovations Waiver service or an IPRS service you will not be responsible for any charges. For those who do

not qualify for either funding opportunities Abilities Inc. will work with the team to offer you the best services possible using our sliding fee scale. As always, we want you to feel comfortable, so feel free to bring along a member of your family, or a close friend that you trust if you would like...but remember that we will be discussing very personal and private information, so be prepared to give written permission for us to discuss this in front of them. These goals are very important in determining the type of service and the amount of service you qualify for. They cannot be developed without your input, after all, they are your goals. They consider your weaknesses and strengths and your preferences. Once the goals have been developed, and all necessary paperwork has been completed, it is submitted for approval by the MCO, or Health Care Plan. Without their approval, the services cannot be provided. Once they are approved, then with your assistance, a staff member is chosen to provide you the proper supports, according to your goals. It is very important that you do your part in meeting these goals, by following all the rules, and being always available for services.

Location of the services

All services offered at Abilities Inc. are community based. That means that you will be in your community, interacting with your peers. Our goal is to help you become a part of the community you live in...after all, it is YOUR community!

Length of Services

As always, there may be some services that can only be provided to you for a certain length of time. Your Care Coordinator, or the Qualified Professional will inform you if that is the case, so that you know ahead of time how long you have been approved for services to last.



Reviewing your services

From time to time, your Care Coordinator and or the Qualified Professional will meet with you to review the services you are receiving. During that time, they will obtain information from you to ensure that the services are still meeting your needs, and if there are any changes that need to be made to the supports you are receiving.



EMPLOYMENT WITH ABILITIES INC.

If you are working as an employee of Abilities Inc, please remember that you are a regular employee, and are treated as such. You are subject to the same rules and regulations that all employees of the agency are subject to. Those rules apply to all people.

There may also be other rules that are part of the Personnel manual, that you have access to by visiting our office.

Hours of work and Public Holidays

- **Employee hours vary according to their position.**
- **Normal working hours for office staff are from Monday to Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with a one-hour lunch break. This lunch break is typically from 12:00pm-1:00pm, however this will vary depending on the nature of work. Normal working hours for Paraprofessionals**

and hourly employees vary depending on the nature of the work involved.

- It is the duty of all staff to report for work and be punctual on every official working day. If they are unable to attend or are late due to unavoidable circumstances, they should inform their supervisor or contact the Office Manager as soon as possible.
- All absences from duty will require reasonable explanation from the employee and approval of the Supervisor or Office Manager. Absenteeism and habitual late coming are causes for disciplinary action under disciplinary code.
- Public and official holidays will be observed in accordance with the public holiday's laws of each country
- Staff members and hourly employees may be required to work on official holidays. For hourly employees, this is at regular time/pay. For salaried employees, this is included in their existing salary.
- Management staff are salaried employees, and do not receive overtime pay.

Benefits

Paid company benefits are not provided, however Abilities Inc. uses AFLAC Inc. for supplemental insurance needs. For more information please contact the Office Manager.



Punctuality and Absence from duty

- If for any unforeseen reason a staff member is unable to report for duty it is their responsibility to notify their supervisor or Office Manager no later than 12:00 hours on the day of the absence of their inability to report to work. Otherwise, the absence will be considered as desertion from duty. Leave form must be completed within same day upon resuming duty.
- Breaks for private purposes need appropriate authorization by the responsible Supervisor in advance. The time taken for such breaks does not count as time worked and should be made up by the staff member at a time mutually agreeable to the staff member and the Office Manager.

Daily attendance and punctuality

- It is the duty of all staff/employees to report for work and be punctual on every official working day. If they are unable to attend or are late due to unavoidable circumstances, they should inform their supervisor as quickly as possible.
- All absences from duty require reasonable explanation from the employee and approval of the Supervisor. Absenteeism and habitual late coming are causes for disciplinary action.

Overtime

- For Management and Paraprofessional staff, the nature of providing supports to people with disabilities means that staff will need to work irregular hours. Therefore, no overtime will be payable to any member of staff.

- In certain situations, staff may be required to work hours more than the stipulated work hours.

Annual Leave/Vacation

- All employees will be entitled to 5 working days of annual leave each full year of service. For Management staff, this is paid time off, however for Paraprofessional staff and other hourly employees, this is non-paid time off. All time off is subject to approval by Management. It must be requested no later than 14 days in advance. If leave/vacation is denied, then it is expected that the staff/employee report to work on their regularly scheduled day. They may submit request for alternative days off. Again, this is subject for approval by Management. Failure to show for work will result in disciplinary action to be determined by Management.
- A staff member/employee is eligible for Annual Leave after completion of Probation, effective from the employment date.
- The leave year will commence on 1 January and end on 31 December. Calculations of annual leave for service less than one year shall be made in proportion to the length of service.
- Staff shall be required to take their annual leave within the calendar year. No carry-over of annual leave is allowed.
- Leave Request Forms are available from the Office Manager. Leave forms must be filled in and signed by the staff member/employee and approved by the Office Manager or Director.

Medical/Sick Leave

- Management are salaried employees and automatically receive paid medical/sick leave. Paraprofessional staff and hourly employees do not receive paid medical/sick leave.

- Such leave will be granted on production of a medical certificate from a registered medical practitioner, covering the period of ailment.
- Sick leave of longer than one month will require the approval of the Director. A report from a doctor will be required to return to work.
- Management staff on such leave will be given full pay for the first two months, then half pay for a further two months, thereafter termination on medical grounds will be considered.



Maternity Leave

- Female Management and hourly employees shall be entitled to paid maternity leave as defined in the labor laws of the host country. Paraprofessional staff and hourly employees are not entitled to paid maternity leave, as they are contracted and hourly workers. They may take time off however, without pay.
- When applying for maternity leave the staff/employee must submit a medical certificate from a qualified medical practitioner stating the expected date of delivery.
- Expectant mothers shall be eligible for time off for ante and postnatal medical examination with prior approval of the Office Manager, until the child is six months old.
- Breast-feeding mothers will be given two hours off in a day for nursing purposes, until the child is four (4) months old. The employee/staff member and the Office Manager will agree on the appropriate timings.

- An employee/staff member granted maternity leave as set forth above are guaranteed reinstatement at the same level occupied at the time, she commenced maternity leave upon resuming work.
- An employee/staff member wishing to stay away from work for longer than the stipulated period to care for the infant may apply for special leave without pay, provided that upon return they have at least six (6) additional months of service on their appointment.
- Provided the total absence does not exceed six months, The Company will reinstate the staff member upon return from such extended leave in the same position occupied at the time she commenced maternity leave, or in a mutually agreed comparable position with salary and benefits equivalent to those to which she was entitled at the beginning of maternity leave.

Paternity Leave

- Male Management and hourly employees shall be eligible to paid paternity leave of ten (10) working days per delivery by their registered spouse/partner. Paraprofessional staff are not entitled to paid maternity leave, as they are contracted workers. They may take time off however, without pay.
- The request must be supported by valid evidence of delivery or expected delivery and prior approval must be obtained from the Office Manager.
- Paternity leave must be taken within four weeks period before or after the wife's delivery. Paternity leaves not taken during this period will be forfeited.

Compassionate Leave

- Staff and employees shall be granted up to a maximum of 5 calendar days to attend to personal misfortunes such as death of an immediate member of the staff member's family (spouse, parents, parents-in-law, and child). This time is paid for Management,

however for Paraprofessionals and hourly employees, this is unpaid time.

- Such leave is not deducted from annual leave and must be approved by the Office Manager.

Leave without pay

- Unpaid leave may be granted in writing at the discretion of the Director when a staff member wishes to interrupt service with the company for professional or exceptional personal reasons. Staff members may proceed on such leave upon receiving approval in writing. Eligibility for unpaid leave is generally limited to staff members who have rendered at least 1 year of continuous service.
- The maximum period of leave without pay shall not exceed six months for the entire period of employment with the company, except in special circumstances to be approved by the Director.
- During the period of special leave without pay, staff members are not entitled to their salaries or their allowances or benefits. Leave without pay shall not be deemed to be continuous service for computing accrual of leave days.



What to do in case of bad weather...

In the event of adverse weather conditions, concerned parties dial 252268-8700 or 252-526-1350 for instructions. If services are cancelled due to emergency weather conditions, staff will immediately call the client they are providing services to, to inform them of the situation. Services are returned to normal after approval by the President/Director. Employees are provided instructions when they call the numbers listed above

**SOCIAL SECURITY INCOME AND SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY BENEFITS
AND YOUR EMPLOYMENT.....HOW WILL IT AFFECT ME????**



Can you work while you receive Social Security Disability Benefits (SSDI)?

Generally, you can't start doing "substantial gainful activity" or SGA and continue to receive disability benefits. In a nutshell, doing SGA means you are working and making more than the designated amount for that year. You will have to contact the Social Security Office in your area for that amount, as it is subject to change every year. There are exceptions to this rule, however. For SSDI recipients, there is a trial work period during which you can make more than the SGA amount without losing your benefits.

SSDI recipients are entitled to test their ability to work and continue to receive full benefits regardless of whether they make more than the SGA amount, for a nine-month trial work period. For 2018, the SSA considers any month where a person has a monthly income of more than \$850 a trial work month. If you are self-employed, any month where you work more than 80 hours (or earn more than \$850) is a trial work month.

Once you have completed the nine-month trial work period, for a period of 36 months, you can still receive SSDI for any month where your earnings fall below the SGA level. This is called the extended period of eligibility.

Following your trial work period, if your SSDI payments have stopped because your income is substantial, the SSA gives you five years during which your benefits can be reinstated if you again stop working because of your disability. During the five-year period, the SSA will not require you to file a new disability application to get benefits. This is called expedited reinstatement.

Working and SSI Benefits

You can begin to work and continue to receive SSI benefits as long as your wages and other resources do not exceed the SSA's income limit for SSI; however, your monthly benefit amount will be reduced in proportion to your income.

Your monthly benefit amount is also affected by the amount your state adds to the federal SSI payment, if any. For more information, see our article on how much SSI pays.

Disability-Related Work Expenses

If, because of your disability, you have certain work-related expenses that a non-disabled person does not, the SSA will deduct these costs from your monthly earnings when calculating your benefits. Examples of qualifying expenses include special transportation needs or counseling services. These are called impairment-related work expenses, or IRWE.

Reporting Requirements

Both SSI and SSDI recipients must report to the SSA:

- the start and stop date for any job**
- any changes to duties, pay scale, or hours worked, and**
- whether you have any work-related expenses because of your disability.**

You must also report your monthly wages to the SSA. If you report your wages by telephone, it must be done by the 6th of the next month; if you mail or bring in your paystub to your local SSA, it must be done by the 10th of the next month. SSI recipient can now also report wages with a smartphone app, and SSDI recipients can now report wages online using their Social Security account. Social Security's website has more information on telephone wage reporting and online wage reporting.

GOT A PROBLEM OR CONCERN?



Anytime you have a problem or concern about the services you are receiving from Abilities Inc., please call us and tell us about it! If you don't feel comfortable calling us...have a relative or a friend, or even your Care Coordinator call us and let us know! We want your experience with Abilities Inc. to be a positive one. Remember, our door is always open!



We also want you to know that we want you to help us make our services better. Give us your ideas...

...tell us how we can do things better!!!

LET YOUR VOICES BE HEARD!!!



AS A CONSUMER OF MENTAL HEALTH/DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES OR SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE TREATED WITH DIGNITY, PRIVACY, AND HUMANE CARE. (GS-122C-57)

YOUR RIGHTS INCLUDE

1. BEING FREE FROM MENTAL AND PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT, ABUSE, NEGLECT AND EXPLOITATION.	2. LIVING AS NORMALLY AS POSSIBLE WHILE RECEIVING CARE AND TREATMENT
3. RECEIVING CARE, SERVICES, AND TREATMENT WITHIN 30 DAYS, BASED ON A PLAN WRITTEN ESPECIALLY FOR YOU THAT SHOULD HELP YOU REGAIN OR INCREASE YOUR CAPABILITIES, THAT HAS HAD YOUR INPUT, AND RECEIVING A COPY OF THAT PLAN JUST BY ASKING.	4. HAVING ACCESS TO YOUR TREATMENT RECORD, EXCEPT WHEN THAT INFORMATION WOULD BE HARMFUL TO YOUR WELL BEING, HAVE THAT RECORD EXPLAINED TO YOU IF NEEDED IN A WAY THAT YOU CAN UNDERSTAND IT, AND TO MAKE ALTERATIONS IN THAT RECORD.
5. BEING ASSURED OF CONFIDENTIAL TREATMENT,	6. RECEIVING AGE-APPROPRIATE TREATMENT FOR YOUR DIAGNOSIS
7. CONSENTING TO OR REFUSING ANY TREATMENT OFFERED, EXCEPT IN AN EMERGENCY OR WHEN COURT ORDERED.	8. To know what is expected from you as a person receiving services from this agency. To know the rules and the consequences.
9. BEING FREE FROM UNNECESSARY OR EXCESSIVE MEDICATION, ELECTROSHOCK THERAPY, EXPERIMENTAL DRUGS OR PROCEDURES AND NOT HAVING MEDICINE USED AS PUNISHMENT, DISCIPLINE OR FOR THE CONVENIENCE OF STAFF.	10. EXERCISE YOUR CIVIL RIGHTS SUCH AS BUYING OR SELLING PROPERTY, SIGNING A CONTRACT, REGISTERING TO VOTE, SUING OTHERS WHO HAVE WRONGED YOU AND MARRYING OR DIVORCING, RAISING A FAMILY.
11. BEING FREE FROM PHYSICAL RESTRAINTS OR SECLUSIONS, EXCEPT WHEN NECESSARY TO PREVENT DANGER TO SELF OR OTHERS, OR SUBSTANTIAL PROPERTY DAMAGE.	12. TALKING TO SOMEONE IF YOU HAVE A COMPLAINT ABOUT SERVICES.
13. CONTACTING ABILITIES INC. AT 252.939-9944 OR THE CLIENTS RIGHTS COORDINATOR AT YOUR LOCAL MANAGEMENT ENTITY OR MANAGED CARE ORGANIZATION.	14. TO KNOW THE AGENCY'S GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE AND TO BE ASSISTED IN THAT PROCESS WHEN NEEDED.
15. KNOW THAT THE FACILITY WILL NOT DISCLOSE ANY INFORMATION ABOUT YOU UNLESS IT IS FOR A COURT ORDER, GUARDIANSHIP PURPOSES, IN CASES OF IMMINENT DANGER TO YOUR HEALTH, SAFETY OR PHYSICAL AND OR MENTAL WELL-	16. TO KNOW WHAT INFORMATION IS DISCLOSED ABOUT YOU, WHO IT WAS DISCLOSED TO AND FOR WHAT PURPOSE IT WAS DISCLOSED FOR, AND THAT IT CANNOT BE DISCLOSED WITHOUT VOLUNTARY WRITTEN CONSENT FROM YOU OR
BEING, TO ASSIST YOU IN OBTAINING FINANCIAL BENEFITS. TO KNOW THAT INFORMATION WILL NOT BE DISCLOSED WITHOUT WRITTEN CONSENT WHEN FEDERAL STATUTES PROHIBIT THAT RELEASE	YOUR GUARDIAN, AND THAT SERVICES ARE NOT BASED ON WHETHER OR NOT YOU SIGN.



HELP!!!

OTHER HELPFUL INFORMATION

- TRILLIUM HEALTH RESOURCES MCO/HEALTH PLAN
Member and Recipient Services: 1-877-685-2415 (Toll-Free)

PROVIDING SERVICES TO...

Bertie, Hertford, Camden, Martin, Chowan, Northampton, Currituck, Pasquotank, Gates, Perquimans, Halifax, Warren, Beaufort, Pamlico, Dare, Pitt, Edgecombe, Tyrrell, Greene, Washington, Hyde, Wilson, Nash, Carteret, Onslow, Craven, Pender, Duplin, Sampson, Jones, Lenoir, Wayne, Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus, Hoke, Lee, Moore, New Hanover, Robeson, Scotland, Anson, Guilford, Montgomery, Randolph, Richmond

- ALLIANCE HEALTHCARE PLAN
Member and Recipient Services: 1-919-856-6400

PROVIDING SERVICES TO

WAKE AND DURHAM COUNTIES

- DIVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES

contactdmh@ncmail.net

- DMH ADVOCACY AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

1-919-715-3197

- DIVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES REGULATION

1-800-624-3004

- DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES

1-919-733-3818

- DISABILITY RIGHTS NC- FORMERLY GOVERNOR'S ADVOCACY COUNCIL FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

1-877-235-4210

COVID-19

COVID-19 and other types of COVID are a part of our world now. It is understandable how frustrated and concerned, even scared a person can be when listening to news, social media and friends concerning the issue. We want you to have the latest information available so that you are as knowledgeable as possible concerning COVID, so that you can make informed decisions about your care, and your community. Abilities Inc. has information available on our agency website that you can visit and read at your leisure. If you are having trouble understanding some of the information, please ask your support staff or a family member for assistance. They will be happy to sit down with you and help you understand.

The next few pages offer some information for you, along with ways to deal with the stress and anxiety that comes along with understanding this pandemic. Remember, we are all in this together, and are here for each other. Our office is open to you anytime you have a concern or question, and we want you to feel free to contact us.



COVID-19

General Prevention

Florida Department of Health • [FloridaHealth.gov](https://www.FloridaHealth.gov) • tinyurl.com/FLcdcprevention

Protect yourself from all infectious diseases by using these precautions.



Stay home when you are sick



Avoid contact with people who are sick



Get adequate sleep and eat well-balanced meals



Wash hands often with soap and water – 20 seconds or longer



Dry hands with a clean towel or air dry your hands



Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands or after touching surfaces



Cover your mouth with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing



Clean and disinfect “high touch” surfaces often



Call before visiting your doctor

Clean all “high-touch” surfaces every day.

High touch surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tables, and bedside tables. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them. Use a household cleaning spray or wipe according to the label instructions. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

MANAGING CORONA VIRUS (COVID-19) ANXIETY



For You

- Avoid excessive exposure to media coverage
- Connect through calls/text/internet
- Add extra time for daily stress relief
- Practice self-care
- Focus on your mental health

BlessingManifesting

For Kids

- Reassure them that they're safe
- Let them talk about their worries
- Share your own coping skills
- Limit their news exposure
- Create a routine & structure

For Quarantine/Isolation

- Keep in contact with your loved ones via social media, texts, and phone calls
- Create a daily self-care routine
- Keep yourself busy: games, books, movies
- Focus on new relaxation techniques



Wouldn't it be a boring world if everyone was the same? If we all looked identical, dressed alike, ate the same foods, spoke the same language, the world would be pretty uninteresting! What makes the world exciting is that we're all different. Diversity simply means differences.

Here at Abilities Inc., we want people to feel free to let their diversity shine! If you have any cultural interest, or needs we encourage you to let us know about them. Maybe you can teach us how to better support you in your community. We welcome any suggestions or ideas in making your community better for you.

Freedom of Speech and Right to Protest

Freedom of speech is the right to speak, write, and share ideas and opinions without facing punishment from the government. The First Amendment protects this right by prohibiting Congress from making laws that would curtail freedom of speech.

Even though freedom of speech is protected from infringement by the government, the government is still free to restrict speech in certain circumstances. Some of these circumstances include:

- **Obscenity and Indecency** – In *Alliance for Community Media v. FCC*, the Supreme Court found that obscenity and child pornography have no right to protection from the First Amendment, and as such, the government has the ability to ban this media altogether. But when it comes to indecency, which is generally defined by the courts as something describing or depicting offensive sexual activity, the Supreme Court has found this speech protected. But the government can regulate this speech on radio and television, so

long as it's for a compelling reason and is done in the least restrictive manner.

- **Defamation** – Private and public figures can sue someone for statements they have made. Public figures must prove that the person made the statement with **malice**, which means knowing the statement was false or having a **reckless disregard** for the truth or falsity of the statement. Private figures must prove the person failed to act with **reasonable care** when they made the statement.
- **Incitement** – If a person has the intention of inciting the violations of laws that is imminent and likely, while directing this incitement at a person or groups of persons, their speech will not be protected under the First Amendment.
- **Fighting words**

The Right to Protest

The First Amendment protects your right to assemble and express your views through protest. However, police and other government officials are allowed to place certain narrow restrictions on the exercise of speech rights.

There are several actions which may be unlawful while protesting in North Carolina. This includes **obstructing traffic, trespassing on private or public property, or committing permit violations while assembling**. In many cases, law enforcement may charge individuals who commit these actions with a misdemeanor charge.

Abilities Inc. supports everyone's Right to Free Speech and Right to Lawful Protest, however, illegal acts will not be tolerated. Please ask your support worker any questions you may have concerning these rights.