

What we believe

Why we believe in it, and what that means for people with disabilities and their families.





IHC will advocate for the
rights, inclusion
and **welfare** of all people
with an intellectual disability and
support them to live
satisfying lives
in the community

FOREWORD

THIS DOCUMENT OUTLINES THE VALUES AND PHILOSOPHY OF IHC. IT IS THE CORNERSTONE OF WHAT WE BELIEVE AS AN ORGANISATION, AND HOW WE RELATE TO PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES, THEIR FAMILIES AND THEIR COMMUNITIES.

It is our most important document. We need every person involved in our organisation to be committed to it – people with intellectual disability, their families and supporters as well as our 3,000 members, our 5,500 staff, and our many valued volunteers.

We've held our values throughout the history of the organisation. We are proud of our values. We've stood on national and international stages and stated them. Our work reflects these values, such as fighting to close institutions, lobbying government for services, working with families, and providing support to people to be part of their communities so they have a place to belong. Our work promotes the human rights of people with intellectual disability as defined by New Zealand and international law.

This is a forward-thinking document. It leads, guides and reminds us of our ongoing commitment to people with intellectual disabilities.

I am proud to be part of an organisation that has the courage to state clearly what it believes in, and the energy to put it into action.

Donald Thompson
National President



People with an intellectual disability have the right to be treated with
respect and dignity

IHC BELIEVES THIS BECAUSE:

1. People with intellectual disabilities are individuals with the same feelings and rights as anyone else.
2. People with intellectual disabilities are sometimes discriminated against because some people do not see them as individuals with these same rights and feelings.
3. People who receive services can be vulnerable to organisational routines that dominate their lives and suppress their individuality.
4. New Zealand is a multicultural society with a range of values and beliefs. These are an important part of an individual's sense of belonging.

IHC WILL:

- treat people as individuals
- protect people from abuse and neglect
- respect people's values and culture
- respect privacy
- ensure legislation and international conventions are observed
- monitor policy and law to ensure they do not discriminate
- promote a positive image of people with intellectual disabilities

People with an intellectual disability have the right to a say in *their own lives*

IHC BELIEVES PEOPLE WITH AN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY:

- have a right to make choices and have a say in what happens to them
- are capable of being involved in making decisions
- must have information on which to base their decisions
- must be supported to understand the consequences of their decisions
- if necessary, must be helped to communicate their decisions

IHC BELIEVES THIS BECAUSE:

1. People know what they want and need. Having control of their lives increases self-esteem, which is vital for confident social interactions and relationships.
2. Having a disability does not mean individuals are not able to learn about their rights and responsibilities and make choices.
3. Under law, everyone, including people with intellectual disabilities, is presumed to be able to make decisions unless it is proven otherwise. Only when all communication options are explored and every effort is made to assess decision-making capability, should a decision be made on their behalf.
4. Support to make choices will change as children grow into adults, take more responsibility and learn from their experiences.

IHC WILL:

- involve people with disabilities in decisions about their lives
- encourage and support people with disabilities to participate in decision-making in IHC
- openly discuss with self advocates, families and independent advocates any risks associated with particular decisions
- recognise the importance of families, advocates and networks in the decision-making process
- involve independent advocates when there is no one who is able to support people with intellectual disabilities to make decisions
- support the development of independent consumer movements that promote self advocacy





People with an intellectual disability have the right to live, learn, work *and enjoy life as part of the community*

IHC BELIEVES PEOPLE WITH AN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY MUST HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

- the same educational opportunities as everyone else
- choose where they live
- interesting and exciting community activities
- opportunities for personal development
- participate in the paid workforce
- have fun, try new things and experience life
- develop friendships with people who care about them
- opportunities for sexual expression and fulfilment

IHC BELIEVES THIS BECAUSE:

1. People with intellectual disabilities have the same needs and aspirations as everyone else.
2. The community is a place where everyone has the freedom to make choices about day-to-day life, mix with different people and interact with others.
3. Segregation leads to people not understanding the community and the community not understanding them.
4. Attitudes change when people discover that everyone has a place.

IHC WILL:

- support people with disabilities to access education, accommodation and work
- provide support so that people can participate in the community
- provide opportunities for friendships and relationships to thrive
- advocate for policy and law that supports inclusion
- identify all possible ways people can participate in local communities

People with an intellectual disability have the right to support

to meet their goals and aspirations

IHC BELIEVES PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES SHOULD HAVE SUPPORT THAT:

- allows them to meet their goals and aspirations
- matches individual needs, no matter how complex
- is provided by people who understand them
- promotes self development and independence
- makes them feel good about themselves
- respects culture, spirituality and sexuality
- eliminates risk of harm or abuse
- enhances and strengthens the family

IHC BELIEVES THIS BECAUSE:

1. Like everyone else, people with disabilities have different needs.
2. Support from IHC is tailored to the individual and is part of a support network that includes the family, the community and friends.
3. People with intellectual disabilities have the same health needs as everyone else and require the same health services.
4. Disability is not an illness, but does require people to have some support for daily living.

IHC WILL:

- work to understand the needs of individuals
- provide support based on individual needs and aspirations
- provide support that is age appropriate
- ensure the dignity of the individual is respected, no matter how complex or challenging their needs may be
- provide training for people with intellectual disabilities, families and support people
- regularly review support, which will change as people learn new skills, learn from experiences and grow older
- help people access other services
- maintain close links with friends and family





People with an intellectual disability have the right to be *part of a family*

IHC BELIEVES:

- children belong in families
- everyone is part of a family
- families provide a sense of identity and belonging
- the definition of family can vary
- families have a lifelong interest and are a source of knowledge
- the role of a family changes over time

IHC BELIEVES THIS BECAUSE:

1. Families provide love, security, knowledge, understanding and a sense of belonging.
2. Most people with intellectual disabilities live with their families.
3. A family's commitment is lifelong, but the role of the family changes as children grow into adulthood and are able to make their own decisions.
4. We believe we can learn from families and they have much support to offer. Service providers cannot replace families.

IHC WILL:

- support families to provide a caring environment for their children
- provide information and support to families as their children go through various phases in their lives
- advocate with families to ensure services are receptive to their needs and the needs of their children
- involve families in planning and decision making
- respect the values, views and knowledge of the families of people using services
- ensure staff understand the role of the family
- ensure children live with suitable families if they are not able to live with their own family
- be proactive about involving families in the lives of their children

IHC supports the principles of

Te Tiriti O Waitangi

IHC BELIEVES THAT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH TE TIRITI O WAITANGI, MĀORI WITH AN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

- participate in decision-making
- be protected by law
- have concerns resolved
- have control of their lives

IHC BELIEVES THIS BECAUSE:

1. Although New Zealand is a country of many cultures, Māori are the indigenous people and have rights under Te Tiriti O Waitangi, an agreement between the Crown and Māori.
2. New Zealand has legislation, such as the Human Rights Act, that recognises the rights of New Zealanders of all cultures.
3. Culture is part of a person's individuality and our commitment to people with intellectual disability and their family must include an understanding of culture if we are to enhance and strengthen an individual's sense of identity.

IHC WILL

- support people to understand and express their cultural differences
- provide information and support that is culturally appropriate
- respect the values, rights and knowledge of different cultures
- ensure staff have training to assist them to support people
- create and identify opportunities for people to participate in cultural activities
- establish links with local Iwi
- have an advisory group of Māori staff that supports the organisation
- encourage family/whānau participation in service planning and decision-making
- respond to requests to share its expertise with other Māori providers



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