

# Promoting oral health for people living in Disability Accommodation Services



**Enter toolkit**

## About

This toolkit is a facilitator's guide, created to encourage and assist others to promote oral health care practices within the disability sector.

In 2009, Dental Health Services Victoria (DHSV), Plenty Valley Community Health Service and Disability Accommodation Services in the North West Metropolitan region worked collaboratively on a demonstration project to improve the provision of oral health care for people with an intellectual disability, living in residential services.

The project involved an oral health information session for staff, introduction of new oral health care practice tools and the establishment of a referral pathway to the local community dental agency.

The DAS Toolkit describes how this project was planned and implemented; contains all of the information and resources used in the original project; and aims to assist others to promote oral health in the disability sector. Remember to adapt the project to the specific needs of the target group.

# The Demonstration Project

The following is an overview of DHSV's 2009 demonstration project. It describes the key components of the project and is designed to assist others in planning oral health promotion interventions for the disability sector.

## Aim:

- To education disability support workers about the importance of oral health care, and promote the use of oral health care practices as outline in the 2009 RSPM.

## Objectives:

- Develop understanding of key oral health messages, access to dental care and availability of dental products/tools to assist the oral hygiene routine.
- Revise the proper use of the *Daily oral health care plan* and *Annual oral health assessment*
- Improve the capacity of disability support workers to dealing behaviours of concerns when supporting someone to complete their oral hygiene routine.

## Methods:

- Define target group and stakeholders; work collaboratively with both to determine the specific needs that your project should address.
- Work with the local community dental agency to set up a treatment pathway for DAS residents (For example: enabling disability support staff to arrange a dental appointment by faxing the local dental agency).
- Hold an oral health information session for DAS staff, promoting key oral health message, demonstrating oral health care practices, including the use of oral health care plans and oral health assessments. Invite other stakeholders.

## Feedback and Evaluation:

- Pre information session survey - to determine current oral health knowledge and confidence in exercising oral health care practices and tools like the oral health assessment and care plans.
- Post information session evaluation – to measure the success of the information session, relevance of information and performance of speakers.
- Pre and post oral health care assessment or care plans could also be used to evaluate the impact the information session had on oral health care practices.

This resource tool contains all the information, instructions and resources required to replicate the demonstration project.

- Remember to make the project specific to the needs of your target group.
- Discuss the group's needs before deciding what type of project you will implement or how.
- Expand on the ideas and resource available in this resource to better meet the target groups need.

# Disability Accommodation Services

## Background Information

This toolkit has been designed specifically for the promotion of oral health care practices in government funded Disability Accommodation Services (DAS). Below is a brief description of the DAS and the oral health care practices specific to this setting.

## About DAS

In Victoria, the Disability Services Division, Department of Human Services is responsible for funding DAS. DAS are shared accommodation for people with intellectual disabilities that need support for daily living. House supervisors and disability support workers assist residents with household management, grocery shopping, food preparation, personal hygiene, medication, community participation and recreation.

Each DAS in Victoria has a [Residential Services Practice Manual \(RSPM\)](#) that outlines the roles and responsibilities of disability support workers. It describes best practice approaches to supporting people who live in residential services. Many other community sector organisations also use the RSPM under licence.

[Section 5.10 Oral health](#) of the RSPM details the oral health care practices for disability support workers and is available in print and electronic versions from the Department of Human Services. The oral health care practices detailed in this section of the RSPM were derived from a 2008 publication published by Dental Health Services Victoria, [Oral health for people with an intellectual disability](#).

The following topics cover key oral health care practices of the RSPM:

- Role of support staff in maintaining a person oral health
- General instructions for supporting daily teeth and denture cleaning
- Care planning requirements a) *Daily oral health care plan* and b) *Annual oral health assessment*

Employees of DHS have access to an interactive version of the RSPM, available via DHS intranet, called "KnowledgeNet". This version includes web links, forms, templates and video demonstrations. Disability support workers use KnowledgeNet as a training resource helping them to understand a range of processes and procedures. If you are not an employee of DHS you can not access KnowledgeNet.

### Instructions for facilitators:

Click here to view [Section 5.10 Oral health](#) from the Residential Services Practice Manual (RSPM).

Facilitators of oral health promotion in the disability sector should become very familiar with Section 5.10 of the RSPM. In particular understanding for the oral health assessment and oral health care planning tools will be required.

# Oral Health Care Practices

## Role of the disability support staff

Staff must support residents to complete their daily oral hygiene routine, ensuring that they:

- have an adequate fluid intake and eat healthy diet with minimal sugary drinks and confectionary.
- attend a routine dental check-up at least once a year, or as advised the dentist
- complete an oral health assessment annually for each resident
- develop an oral health care plan specific to each resident

## What is an oral health care plan?

An [oral health care plan](#) documents an individual's specific oral health care needs and helps staff communicate specific strategies that have been effective or ineffective in supporting an individual in their oral hygiene routine. Used daily, it is a document that continually evolves.

Each resident's oral health care plan must be developed in consultation with the resident, their family (if appropriate), support staff, oral health professional and other professionals such as their speech pathologist.

Following a clearly documented care plan will help to ensure consistency when multiple carers are responsible for a resident's oral care. It is also a valuable resource for staff to communicate strategies that have been effective in supporting an individual in their daily oral health routine.

## What is an oral health assessment?

The [oral health assessment tool](#) is form developed to assist non dental professionals to monitor an individual's oral health needs and determine if professional treatment is required. An oral health assessment is completed upon registration of every new resident and then again at least once a year for all residents.

It is designed to:

- Monitor the resident's oral health
- Evaluate oral hygiene care interventions
- Initiate a dental visit when required
- Assist with resident's individual oral hygiene care planning
- Prioritise resident's dental needs.

The oral health care plan and assessment should be taken to all dental appointments. Support staff should ask the dental professional to review the plans, documenting changes and adding any additional information/instructions.

### Resources:

[Oral health assessment](#) (tool)

[Preparing an oral health care plan](#) (instructions)

[Oral health care plan](#) (template)

[Task break down– brushing teeth](#) (template)

# Accessing Oral Health Services

## When should a dental appointment be made for a resident?

All residents must have at least one oral health check up annually (or as otherwise requested by the person's dentist). In addition, disability support staff can use the Oral Health assessment form to determine if a resident needs to see a dentist for treatment. An oral health assessment is also conducted annually.

A resident should be referred to a dental service if the oral health assessment has identified at least one of the following:

- Person regularly refuses or misses daily oral care
- Person's natural teeth are decayed, broken or loose
- Person's dentures are missing which is affecting their ability to eat
- Person's dentures are broken
- Person's dentures are observed to be loose which is affecting their ability to eat
- Person has not seen a dentist in the past 3 years

Seek urgent dental treatment if the person has any of the signs or symptoms below when the

- Person has ulcerated gums
- Person shows behavioral or verbal signs of dental pain
- Person has observable oral ulceration, swelling or decay.

*Note: This referral criteria was used in the demonstration project. Ensure these are suitable for the dental service provider you are working with.*

## Making a dental appointment

If the person does not have a regular dentist and is the holder of a pensioner concession card or health care card then they can access an oral health professional through the Victorian public dental system.

Support by a letter of recommendation from their case manager, residents of DAS with a health care card or pensioner concession card have priority access and are **exempt from fees** in public oral health agencies. Please [Click here](#) for a contact list of public oral health agencies or [call 1300 360 054](tel:1300360054)

Support staff should take the following information ready to hand over to the dental staff:

- Resident's contact details
- Copy of medical records
- Oral health care plan
- Oral health assessment
- And consent form

## Consent

Doctors and dentists cannot treat a patient without a valid agreement (*consent*) from the patient to undertake treatment. If a patient lacks the capacity to give consent, then the person responsible for that patient (spouse, relative or legal guardian) can provide consent on their behalf.

For more information about consent contact **The Office of Public Advocate** telephone service on **9603 9500** or (toll free) **1800 136 829**; or visit their website at [www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au](http://www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au)

**For more information about eligibility to public oral health services in Victoria contact:**  
**Dental Health Services Victoria** ph:1300 360 054 web: [www.dhsv.org.au](http://www.dhsv.org.au)

# Promoting Oral Health in DAS Settings

## What you may need:

- Facilitator to plan and implement the project.
- A representative from the Disability Services Division, DHS, who is willing to host and participate in the project.
- Support from an oral health professional or community dental agency.

## How to get started:

1. Familiarise yourself with Disability Accommodation Services and their oral health care practices in [Section 5.10 oral health](#) of the RSPM.
2. Develop a rough project plan, based on this [Template for Project Plan](#)
3. Contact the DHS in your region, and ask to speak to the DAS Learning and Development Coordinator. Explain the purpose of your call and ask for their support in identifying a suitable group home to participant in your project [Contact details for Regional DHS Offices](#).
4. Contact recommended participants:
  - Confirm their interest in participating.
  - Develop your knowledge of your target group, including any particular oral health issues they would like to be addressed.
  - Determine and confirm details of the presentation/workshop (dates, location, and availability of resources).
5. Using the information that you have obtains complete your project plan detailing an outline of your presentation, required resource (developed/obtained)
6. Review the resources templates from the 2009 demonstration project. You may use these exact resources or personalise them to suit your project's needs or presentation style (see resources below for presentation).
7. Develop a lesson plan for your information session. View an example from the Demonstration project - [Lesson Plan of 2009 oral health information session](#)
8. Develop your presentation, Gather props to assist you with your presentation. (a display of dental products was used in the demonstration project)

### Resource Templates from the 2009 Demonstration Project:

[Template for Project Plan](#)

[Presentation slides for oral health information session](#)

[Contact Details for Regional DHS Offices](#)

### Audience handouts:

[Section 5.10 oral health of the RSPM](#)

[Case Study: exercise sheet for oral health care planning](#)

[Poster for oral health assessment](#)

[Evaluation form](#) - for information session

# Oral Health Information Session

## A lesson plan from the demonstration presentation

### Topics to cover

- Causes and prevention of oral disease
- Developing an oral health care plan
- Completing an oral health assessment
- Practical oral health care ideas for carers
- Oral health products and tools
- Access to oral health services
- Involve target group in a review of current dietary habits
- Dentally appropriate lifestyle and behavioural changes

### Presentation Outline:

<b>Duration</b>	0.5 - 1.5hrs (depends on availability of time and type of session that you run)	
<b>Tone</b>	Informative and interactive	
<b>Audience</b>	DAS house supervisor or disability support worker	
<b>Speakers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dental professional (knowledge or experience in special needs dentistry is an advantage)</li> <li>• Representative from Disability Services e.g. house supervisor or their domain manager (to speak about oral health care planning and strategies for implementation of processes)</li> </ul>	
<b>Handouts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information session outline</li> <li>• Presentation slide handouts</li> <li>• Oral health assessment form</li> <li>• Oral health care plan form</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Task breakdown form</li> <li>• Contact details of public dental agencies in Victoria</li> <li>• Evaluation form</li> <li>• Case study</li> </ul>
<b>Required Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Computer/ laptop</li> <li>• Projector</li> <li>• Projector screen</li> <li>• Pens</li> </ul>	<b>Additional materials</b>
<b>Delivery methods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Display of oral health products and tools</li> <li>• Demonstration of modified toothbrushes</li> <li>• <a href="#">Contact list for dental agencies</a></li> </ul>	
<b>Set up on the day</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interactive workshop</li> <li>• Demonstrations</li> <li>• Formal presentation/lecture</li> <li>• Question/Answer as directed by the Audience</li> </ul>	
<b>Set up on the day</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set the room up in manner so that all audience members can see the presentation and speaker, but are able to interact with each other easily as well.</li> <li>• You may wish to include a working lunch after or during the presentation to encourage participation and further discussion.</li> </ul>	

# Setting Up a Dental Referral

## Priority access and copayment exemption

Currently, registered clients of mental health and disability services, supported by a letter of recommendation from their case manager or staff of special developmental schools, have priority access to public dental services and can apply for copayment exemption. This applies to DAS residents.

For this reason, project facilitators have the opportunity to advocate for improved access to services for DAS residents.

In the demonstration project, DHSV approached the public oral health agency at Plenty Valley Community Health Service (CHS) to discuss

Many residents in the Plenty Valley CHS's locality chose to see private dentists. There DHSV recommends

## What you need to do...

In collaboration with the public oral health agency, decide on a referral and service provision pathway for DAS residents. This may be a direct fax system from disability support workers to the administration desk. Once a faxed referral form is received the resident is given the next available appointment.

If there is not a referral form already available from the oral health agency for you to use, adapt the template below to suit both organisations. Ensure it is easy for DAS staff to fill out and covers all relevant information required for treatment, this will include medical history and informed consent.

Use the oral health information session to demonstrate to house supervisors how the referral process works and how to complete the referral form.

Instruct staff to take the residents' oral health care plans and oral health assessments to dental appointments. The oral health professional may wish to provide additional information.

### Resources:

[Dental referral form](#) (example)

[Contact details of public dental agencies in Victoria](#)

For information review [Access to Dental Services](#) (page 5)

# Feedback and Evaluation

## What you need to do...

Plan an evaluation strategy at the beginning of the project. Determine what will be measured or recorded and how it will be done.

Ensure that the following measurements are recorded over the course of the project:

- Number of people who are invited to attend the oral health information session and the number who actually attend. Keep a list of their names and contact details.
- The number of residents who have an oral health care plan and an oral health assessment completed.
- The number of residents requiring a dental referral, based on the oral health assessment criteria.
- The number of residents who were actually referred to a dentist and the number of residents who received dental services.
- The number of residents who did not have an existing dental service provider.
- Gather feedback from the audience about the oral health information session, and another stakeholders involved in the project.
- Self evaluation and reflective learning is also important. Determine what worked well, what didn't work well and how you could have improved these outcomes.

## Suggestions to measure impact...

1. Pre and post questionnaires will enable you to determine the effectiveness of the oral health information session (*see resource section below for templates*).
2. Have participants' complete one oral health assessment, one oral health care plan before attending the oral health information session.
  - At the start of the information ask participants to rate their performance/confidence and table any challenges that they experienced
  - Ask the participants to repeat the same processes after the oral health information session and compare the two (pre and post results).

### Resources...

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Pre-oral health information session questionnaire</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Oral health information session evaluation</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Section 5.10 Oral health RSPM</a></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Oral health assessment tool</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Oral health care plan template</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Instructions for house supervisors and disability support workers</a></li> </ul> |
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# Resources

<p><b>Publications</b></p> <p><a href="#">Oral health for people with intellectual disabilities (DHSV, 2008)</a> PDF</p> <p><a href="#">Section 5.10 oral health (of the 2009 RSPM)</a> PDF</p> <p><a href="#">The Residential Service Practise Manual</a> (DHS, 2009) Weblink to PDF and DOC</p> <p><a href="#">Oral health guidelines (DHS, 2003)</a> PDF</p>	
<p><b>Resource tools</b></p> <p><a href="#">Oral health assessment tool</a> PDF</p> <p><a href="#">Oral health care plan</a> PDF</p> <p><a href="#">Task break down—brushing teeth</a> PDF</p> <p><a href="#">Referral form</a> (template) DOC</p>	<p><b>Other resources</b></p> <p><a href="#">Search for a local dental agency</a></p> <p><a href="#">Contact details for Regional DHS Offices</a></p> <p><a href="#">Instructions for house supervisors and disability support workers</a> DOC</p>
<p><b>Project outline</b></p> <p><a href="#">Template for Project Plan</a> DOC</p> <p><a href="#">Evaluation form</a> (after information session) DOC</p> <p><a href="#">Presentation slide show</a> <a href="#">Presentation PDF</a></p> <p><a href="#">Questionnaire</a> (before information DOC session)</p> <p><a href="#">Case study work sheet</a> DOC</p>	<p><b>Web site links</b></p> <p>Better Health Channel - dental fact sheets <a href="http://www.betterhealthchannel.vic.gov.au">www.betterhealthchannel.vic.gov.au</a></p> <p>Dental Health Services Victoria <a href="http://www.dhsv.org.au">www.dhsv.org.au</a></p> <p>Disability Accommodation Services <a href="http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability">www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability</a>.</p> <p>The Office of Public Advocate <a href="http://www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au">www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au</a></p>



# Glossary

## **Dental Health Services Victoria**

DHSV is the leading public oral health agency in Victoria. They provide high quality, safe and accessible care to all eligible Victorians.

## **Disability Accommodation Services -DAS**

Are group homes for people with a disability where staff are available to support residents to increase their independence and achieve their individual goals through high quality, flexible support.

## **Residential Services Practise Manual -RSPM**

The RSPM outlines the roles and responsibilities of support staff working in residential services managed by the department. It describes best practice approaches to supporting people who live in residential services. The practice manual applies to community residential units, facility-based respite and residential institutions.

## **Disability Support Worker -DSW**

Supports to achieve independence, opportunity and choice; roles include supporting residents with:

- daily living activities
- administering medication and attending medical appointments
- developing skills
- maintaining relationships
- community access and inclusion
- decision-making and choice
- liaising with other services.

## **Department of Human Services - DHS**

DHS is Victoria's largest state government department responsible for the Ministers for Health, Mental Health, Senior Victorians, Community Services and Housing.

DHS plans, funds and delivers health, community and housing services in line with the government's vision for making Victoria a stronger, more caring and innovative state.

## **Public Oral Healthy Agency**

Public dental services that provide subsidised oral health care and emergency services to eligible people within the community.

**Domain Manager** - Manages a number of DAS group home delegated to a region or domain

**House supervisor** - The supervisor of the DAS group home.

## **Oral health assessment**

The oral health assessment tool is a short form developed to assist non dental professionals assess an individual's oral health needs and help them determine if the resident should be referred to a dental professional.

## **Oral health care plan**

an agreement between the resident, their support worker and oral health professional to support the resident to manage their daily oral health routine.