

NOVA SCOTIA RESIDENTIAL AGENCIES ASSOCIATION

LEARNING ABOUT MY RIGHTS

- **A teaching aid for people with disabilities and those who support them.**
- **To be used with “Supporting People to Exercise Their Rights”**

INTRODUCTION

Nova Scotia Residential Agencies Association is committed to supporting people with disabilities to exercise personal and legal rights. Nova Scotia Residential Agencies Association encourages its members to use as their guidelines; the document “Supporting People To Exercise Their Rights”, the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, Values outlined by The Council on Quality and Leadership Personal Outcome Measures, as well as the policies established by each individual agency.

Nova Scotia Residential Agencies Association also encourages its members to strive to ensure that due process has been applied and that individual plans are developed to enable people with disabilities to maintain and/or regain their rights.

This teaching aid is to be used with the document “Supporting People to Exercise Their Rights”. It is written as though all the ideas in “Supporting People to Exercise Their Rights” have been adopted. However even if all those ideas have not been implemented, this teaching aid is still very valuable and useful. It can be adapted for use by each individual agency.

A Restriction happens when someone stops you from making a choice.

You will get information and the support to help you make choices.

If you disagree with a restriction, you may present your situation to a group of people that are not directly involved.

Highlights of the Charter of Rights

Everyone has the right to freedom

Everyone can vote

Everyone can think and believe what they want and tell people their beliefs

Everyone has the right to be treated fairly

Everyone has the right to be respected

Everyone has the right to spend time with who they want

Everyone has the right to have a job they like and to get paid fairly

Everyone has the right to complain if their rights are restricted

Responsibilities

You are responsible for your actions

You are responsible to treat others with respect and fairness

You are responsible to be a good housemate (if you have a housemate)

You are responsible to be a good neighbour

You are responsible to pay your bills

Limitations

Sometimes there are limitations of your choices

Because there is not enough money to allow you to have a choice

Because there is a need to protect you from possible harm or risk

Because there is a need to protect others from possible harm or risk

Because the choice may be immoral or illegal

Because the choice may be offensive to others

Twelve important Rights to consider if you receive support:

- 1. I have the Right to choose where and with whom I live.**
- 2. I have the Right to choose where I work.**
- 3. I have the Right to love and relationship.**
- 4. I have the Right to decide how to spend my money.**
- 5. I have the Right to choose what and when I eat.**
- 6. I have the Right to make my own decisions.**
- 7. I have the Right to privacy.**
- 8. I have the Right to know what information is kept about me and to decide with whom this information is shared with.**
- 9. I have the Right to decide where to go, when and with whom. I decide who my friends are.**
- 10. I have the Right to be treated with dignity and respect by all.**
- 11. I have the Right to be safe, and to be free from abuse and neglect.**
- 12. I have the Right to be treated fairly.**

The law says no one can refuse to rent me a house or an apartment just because I have a disability.

They also cannot make me move out just because I have a disability.

Each agency would like to try very hard to help people choose where and with whom they live. Sometimes money and system restrictions make this very difficult and it may not always be possible.



Where have I lived in the past?

Where and with whom do I want to live now?

**What do I like about my current living arrangements?
What bothers me about my current living arrangements?**



What do I want to change and who can help me with this?

I have the Responsibility to be a good tenant, owner, or housemate.

I have the Responsibility to respect the rights of my neighbours and any persons I live with.

Do I keep my lawn cut?



Do I pay my rent on time?

Do I play my music too loud at night?



Do I bang on my neighbour's wall or door?

Do I do my share to help out in the house?

What do I want to do for work? How do I want to spend my day?



The law says that an employer cannot refuse to hire me just because I have a disability, unless this employer can prove that I would not be able to do the job because of my disability.

The employer is also required to make some changes in the workplace so people with disabilities will be able to do their job.

I have the Right to choose where I want to apply to work. I have the Right to be paid for my work.

I have the Right to quit a job if I don't like it.

Do I like the job I have now?



Where have I worked in the past?



Would I like to explore other kinds of work? Would I like to work full time or part time?

If I prefer not to work, what do I want to do to make my day meaningful *to me*?

I have the Responsibility to be punctual and to follow the rules of the job.

I have the Responsibility to attend regularly and do my job well.

I have the Responsibility to respect my co-workers, customers and employers.



**Do I show up at work on time?
Do I return on time from breaks?**

How many days of work have I missed? Did I have a good reason to miss work?

Am I courteous and polite to the people I work with? To customers? To my employer?

Do I follow the rules of my job?





Who is closest to me?

I have the Right to love & relationship.

I have the Right to express my sexuality.

Others need to respect my choices.

I have the right to learn about relationships.

With whom do I have an intimate relationship? Who do I tell my secrets to?

Do I want more people to be close to me? Who?

How do I learn about relationships and sexuality?



I have the Responsibility to learn how to protect myself.
I have the Responsibility to learn the risks of my decisions.

Where are some safe places to meet people?

What happens if the person I am close to leaves me?

Do I know what “safe sex” means?



I decide how to spend my money



I have the Right to earn money.

I have the Right to decide how to spend my money and to control my money.



What do I want to spend my money on?

Do I carry my own wallet, bank card and money?

Is my name the only name on my bank account?

Does anyone else hold any of my money for me?

I have the Responsibility to budget wisely and to pay for my rent, food, and other necessities.

I have the Responsibility to keep my money safe.

How do I budget my money? Do I need help to budget my money?

Do I save enough money to pay for my rent, food and clothes?



Where do I keep my money?

What to Eat and When to Eat

I have the Right to choose what I want to eat / drink and when.

Do I have free access to my food and drinks?



Are my food and drinks locked away from me?

Does anyone tell me “You’ve had too many cookies, pop, coffee, water, etc.”?



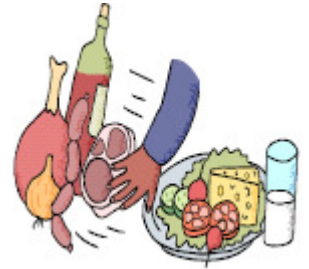
My favourite foods and drinks are:

I have the Responsibility to consider my health and any recommendations from my Doctor.

I have the Responsibility to ensure I do not eat and drink items that belong to others without permission.

Does my Doctor tell me I should watch my weight, cholesterol, etc.?

Do I understand the risks if I choose not to listen to my Doctors recommendations?



Do I respect other people's food and drinks?

Making My Own Decisions!

I have the Right to make decisions about my life.

People will ask my opinion in a way I understand and can respond to.
I have the Right to say NO.



Do people ask me what I would like to do each day?

Do people listen to me when I am expressing my opinion?

Who tells me what to do in my free time?



Do people listen when I don't want to go somewhere or be with someone?



I have the Responsibility to think about my health & safety when I make decisions.

I have the Responsibility to be aware of the consequences to my decisions.

I have the Responsibility to listen to other's points of view if my health or safety is in jeopardy.



Do I understand the consequences to decisions I make?

Do my decisions affect the well being of other people?

Do I take the time to listen to other peoples concerns about my decisions?



I have Privacy

I have the Right to have a private place to go to when I want privacy.

I have the Right to make private phone calls and entertain family and friends in a private place.

No one has the Right to look through my belongings without my permission.



Are meetings about me held in a private place, away from other people who are not involved in the meeting?

Can I keep my things where I want? Can I have my things when I want?



Where can I be alone or entertain family/friends and to make phone calls?

I have the Responsibility to respect the privacy of others.

I have the Responsibility to respect other people's things.

Do I walk into other people's rooms or houses without invitation?



Do I take other people's belongings without permission?

Do I respect the privacy of others when they are on the phone or visiting with family or friends?

I am in control of my personal information

I have the Right to participate in meetings that are about me.

I have the Right to know what information is kept about me and where it is kept.

I have the Right to decide and to object, if necessary, to what information is shared with whom.



**What is in my binders, files, log book, etc. both at home and at the office?
Where are notes and records kept about me?**



Who has access to my records? Do people share information about me without my permission?

Is there anything about me I don't want to share? Do I attend meetings that are about me?



I have the Responsibility to participate in meetings that are about me.

I have the Responsibility not to share information about others without their permission.

I have the Responsibility to make it known when I disagree.

Do I share information about others without permission?



Do I read other people's files or binders without permission?

Do I let people know what information I want to keep private?



To go Places



I have the Right to go where I want, when I want and with whom I want.

I have the Right to choose my friends.

I have the Right to explore and plan new activities.

What kind of fun things do I do in my Community? Is there any where else I'd like to go, or go more often?



How do I find out about what places I could go and what groups I could join?

Do I have enough friends? Do I spend enough time with my friends?



Who can help me meet new people?

I have the Responsibility to be a good friend.

I have the Responsibility to budget my money so I can afford to do the things I want to do.

I have the Responsibility to act responsibly when out having fun.

Do I choose my friends carefully?



Do I act responsibly when I'm out having fun?

Do I treat my friends well? Am I there for them when they need help?



Am I respected by others?

I have the Right to be treated with dignity and respect at all times.



Do my support workers, family, community, housemates treat me with respect? Do my support workers or family embarrass me in front of friends, in the community, etc.?

**Do people treat me as an Adult?
What makes me feel respected?**

When I'm not respected, do people help me express this? How do my support workers help me feel good about myself?

I have the Responsibility to be respectful of others.

I have the Responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect.

How do I treat the people in my life?

Do I respect other people's space and belongings?



Do I know what the people in my life need from me to feel respected?

Am I Safe and free from Abuse & Neglect?

I have the Right to be safe where I live, work and play.

I have the Right not to be hit or abused in any way.

I have the Right not to be afraid

Am I safe in my home, work and in the community?



Does anyone hit or hurt me?
Who can I tell if I'm hurt or if I feel unsafe?

Do people help me learn about what safety, abuse & neglect are?



I have the Responsibility to not hurt others.

I have the Responsibility to tell someone if I'm being hurt.

I have the Responsibility to learn about safety and abuse.

Do I ever hit, bite, or grab other people?



Who would I tell if someone hurt me?

How do I learn about what abuse and neglect is?

Do I make sure my house is safe? Do I leave things lying around where I could trip over them? Do I have a fire extinguisher and smoke detector?



To be treated fairly

I have the right to be treated fairly.

I have the right to due process when my rights are being restricted.



Do people treat me unfairly? Has anyone taken away any of my rights?

Do I have the opportunity to be heard by the Rights Review Committee when my rights are being taken away?

How is staff helping me understand and exercise my rights? How are they helping me change any limitations?



I have the responsibility to respect other people's rights.

I have the responsibility to follow the law.

I have the responsibility to learn about my rights and about the law.

How do I learn about my rights and about the law?



Who do I talk to when my rights are being restricted?

Tell someone if you feel your Rights are being violated –tell staff, family or friends.

Or, if you have a rights committee, call them.

Or, if you have a Rights Restriction form, fill it out and give it to someone.

Or tell an advocacy group such as ACL or People First.