

## **Disability Resource Hub Disclaimer**

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# Donut

The donut (Developed by Charles Handy, The Empty Raincoat 1994)

The donut is a tool that helps staff get clear about their roles and responsibilities. This tool helps people see what they must do, where they can try new things or use their own creativity and judgement, and what is not their responsibility. Developing a donut is often useful when staff are unclear about their responsibilities when supporting someone in a particular situation, or when people are concerned about a risky situation. The donut tool should encourage staff to use their initiative and “think outside the square” without being worried that they will get into trouble if they get it wrong. The donut sort should help to get a better balance of what’s important to and important for the person, even if the sort is being used to gain clarity about a situation regarding health and safety.

This information was developed by Helen Sanderson Associates (Australia) in 2011, for Ageing Disability and Home Care, Department of Human Services NSW, as a resource to support the Lifestyle Planning Practice Guide and Tools. Most of these tools are Person Centred Thinking tools, and were either developed by The Learning Community for Person Centred Practices, or Helen Sanderson Associates. They are used here with permission. We would like to thank the residents, family members and staff for their time and support in developing examples.

These instructions are not intended as a substitute for training. If you are using these tools for the first time and have not attended a Person Centred Thinking course, please seek support from a colleague or manager who has attended training.

The donut is separated into three sections:

## core responsibilities

The things that you are expected to do. These areas should fit with laws, the organisation’s policies and procedures, as well as the organisation’s vision/mission. There may be times when a core responsibility that comes from policy or procedures may make it difficult to support a good balance of important to and for. In this situation, the donut sort can help to demonstrate a need to review policies or procedures.

## creativity and judgement

Where it is expected that new things are tried and creativity is applied. It is not expected that all these attempts will always work, staff should feel confident that they won’t be in trouble if these things don’t work, so long as they have fulfilled their core responsibilities and tried a number of different things. Where there is no set way for how you do something or there is flexibility about what you try. When there is no single answer so trial and error is needed.

## Not your paid responsibility

Things that fall outside the paid supporter’s role. Things that are either the domain of family and friends or fits better with someone else’s role. The point where you will no longer be held accountable so long as you have covered your core responsibilities, and tried a number of creative ideas. When the person or their family are clearly saying they consider this to be ‘none of your business’ or not required by the service.

Sometimes you may feel clear that something is not your responsibility, but there may not be anyone else taking responsibility for this. In this situation, it should become your core responsibility to ensure that someone is paying attention to it – e.g. speak to your manager, make a referral, speak to the person’s family or friends or engage an advocate.



Not our Paid responsibility

Use Creativity/Judgement

Core Responsibilities

# tips

- 1 Start by looking at what is important to and for the person in this situation so you have something to refer back to in ensuring that the donut is going to support a better balance of what's important to and for the person.
- 2 Involve a range of different people who are involved in the situation in order to gather a varied thoughts and ideas.
- 3 It's important to ensure that the donut tool is not used as a way for people to pass their responsibilities on to someone else when it really is their responsibility.



## Important to

*To get where I'm going on time  
– never being late.*

*Not letting other people down.*

*Privacy – not having to tell  
staff everything I'm doing and  
everyone I'm seeing.*

*I appreciate your opinion, but  
in the end it's my choice.*

## Important for

*Being hydrated.*

*Eat and have energy.*

*Have a plan for how/when/  
where I'm going to eat.*

## Using the donut sort to help staff get clear on their responsibilities in the mornings when Alan wants to leave without have breakfast:

Alan lives in a group home with four other people with disabilities. He is a writer and a poet, has a great sense of humour, and is known for being punctual and reliable. Alan has no structured support from services throughout the day, and is generally resentful of any suggestions to use disabilities services other than his accommodation support. Through the day he has various people who he connects with, and groups and classes that he attends. He dislikes staff 'prying' into what he's doing each day. Alan and his staff were frequently having arguments in the mornings when he was running late and wanted to leave the house without breakfast. Alan has muscular dystrophy and is in his early 20s. He stays well most of the time but struggles to put on weight and can easily become dehydrated. Once he has left home in the morning, he is reliant on the goodwill of others to help him with food and drinks, and when he's tired or feeling unwell, he has trouble using his communication device so even asking for help can be challenging.

Alan and his staff used the important to and for sort and the donut to help everyone understand staff responsibilities and Alan's expectations.

## **Not our Paid responsibility**

*To make sure Alan has breakfast at all costs.*

*To stop Alan going out.*

### **Use Creativity/Judgement**

*How to structure your shift so Alan is ready on time and therefore leaving well prepared for his day.*

### **Core Responsibilities**

*Do everything possible to have Alan ready on time.*

*If you're consistently unable to get Alan ready on time, speak with your manager about what is causing the delay – involve Alan in this.*

*Make sure that Alan's fully informed of all conditions on the day e.g. Weather/temperature, how many layers of clothing may be necessary.*

*Be polite and patient in how you give Alan this information.*

*Respect that ultimately, it's his choice to leave without breakfast.*

*Respect his privacy.*

*How you help Alan to think about when/where he will eat/drink next.*