



# **Accessing a Disability Liaison Officer (DLO)**

This resource provides information about Disability Liaison Officers (DLOs). It explains the supports that DLOs can provide Autistic people accessing healthcare at certain public hospitals. It also details how you can make contact with a DLO.

## **What is a Disability Liaison Officer (DLO)?**

Everyone has the right to access quality healthcare and not to be discriminated against. This includes Autistic people and people with a disability. If you experience barriers to accessing healthcare at a public hospital in Victoria, DLOs can help adapt services to be more autism-friendly and work alongside your care team to make this happen.

DLOs can act as disability champions in selected public hospitals across Victoria. A DLO's role is to support you and ensure your access needs are met during your visit. They can work with you, your family members/carers and the healthcare professionals treating you to ensure accommodations you need are put in place. DLOs also lead other work in public hospitals to help healthcare professionals understand how to best support people with disability.

You can find DLOs at selected public hospitals in Victoria only. DLOs **cannot** provide support at private hospitals. Before visiting, or when deciding where to go, you can check if the public hospital you plan to access has a DLO. To see a list of public hospitals with DLOs, visit [Disability Liaison Officer program - Better Health Channel](#).

## **What does a Disability Liaison Officer (DLO) do?**

DLOs can provide a range of supports, whether you visit the hospital as a patient, outpatient, or via community-based services.

Examples of the supports that DLOs may provide to Autistic people include:

- Provide accessible information about the hospital and the care you receive (e.g., social stories, maps and parking information.)
- Organise a walk-through of the service setting before your visit.
- Provide sensory items.
- Arrange changes to the food and drink you receive in hospital to meet your access needs.
- Assist your treating healthcare professionals to understand your communication needs.
- Assist you to have access to your support worker(s) during your visit.
- Arrange access to an interpreter.
- Assist you to receive psychosocial support.
- Assist you to access COVID-19 vaccination, assessment and treatment.
- Assist you to coordinate your appointments.
- Link you with relevant health services.

The supports provided by different DLOs can vary. Check with the DLO team at the hospital you plan to access for more information about the support they can offer.

## **How do I access a Disability Liaison Officer (DLO)?**

There are no eligibility requirements for accessing a DLO. The only requirement is that you identify as having a disability/being disabled. There is no cost to accessing a DLO and their services are provided free of charge.

To contact a DLO, you can do one of the following:

- Go to the DLO information page on the relevant hospital website (see link for list of public hospitals with DLOs provided above). The information page will provide details about how to phone or email the DLO team at the hospital you plan to visit.
- If you currently receive care at a public hospital, ask your treating healthcare professionals about a referral to a DLO.
- Send a request for DLO support to [DLCoordinator@dhhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:DLCoordinator@dhhs.vic.gov.au).
- Carers and disability support workers can also contact a DLO on your behalf.

Most DLOs operate on weekdays. It is best to contact a DLO well ahead of your visit or stay.

## **Contact Autism Connect for assistance**

If you need assistance with accessing a DLO, including identifying what kind of support you might need, contact our Autism Connect Advisors.

**Phone:** 1300 308 699

**Email:** [info@autismconnect.org.au](mailto:info@autismconnect.org.au)

**Website and webchat:** [www.amaze.org.au/autismconnect/](http://www.amaze.org.au/autismconnect/)

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#### **Autism Connect**

National autism support line  
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