

Neighbourhood Connections would like to thank KeyRing and Neighbourhood Networks for the use of their information in the creation of this booklet.

KMD 0315



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help is just around the corner



Marillac House would like to acknowledge the support of the Department of Human Services in the development of Neighbourhood Connections.



**Neighbourhood
Connections**

Neighbourhood Connections

Help is literally ‘around the corner’

When you live independently in the community, and are responsible for a flat or house, you face many challenges. Neighbourhood Connections gives direct, structured practical and emotional support to help you meet these challenges. As a Neighbourhood Connections member, you are encouraged to take a healthy level of risk, without compromising your safety.

With Neighbourhood Connections’ multiple levels of support, Network Members are assured of help at all times:

- > Your Community Living Worker lives nearby. They will carry out planned support and respond quickly to any problems, such as any signs of deteriorating mental or physical health.
- > As a member of Neighbourhood Connections your skills are valued, and your Community Living Worker helps you share your skills with your neighbours.
- > Neighbourhood Connections members get support to build healthy links with neighbours, community organisations, police, the supermarket, public transport operators and the local community centre.
- > If more difficult issues come up, a Neighbourhood Connections Network Manager can intervene to support network members.
- > Community Living Workers get to know all the network members very well. They can quickly and effectively advocate to help members if they need specialist support.
- > Neighbourhood Connections network members can also get help from other network members, not just from the Community Living Worker.
- > Over time in the network, Neighbourhood Connections members become more confident in their own resources and the resources of their neighbours and wider community, and rely less on the Community Living Worker. It is truly empowering.

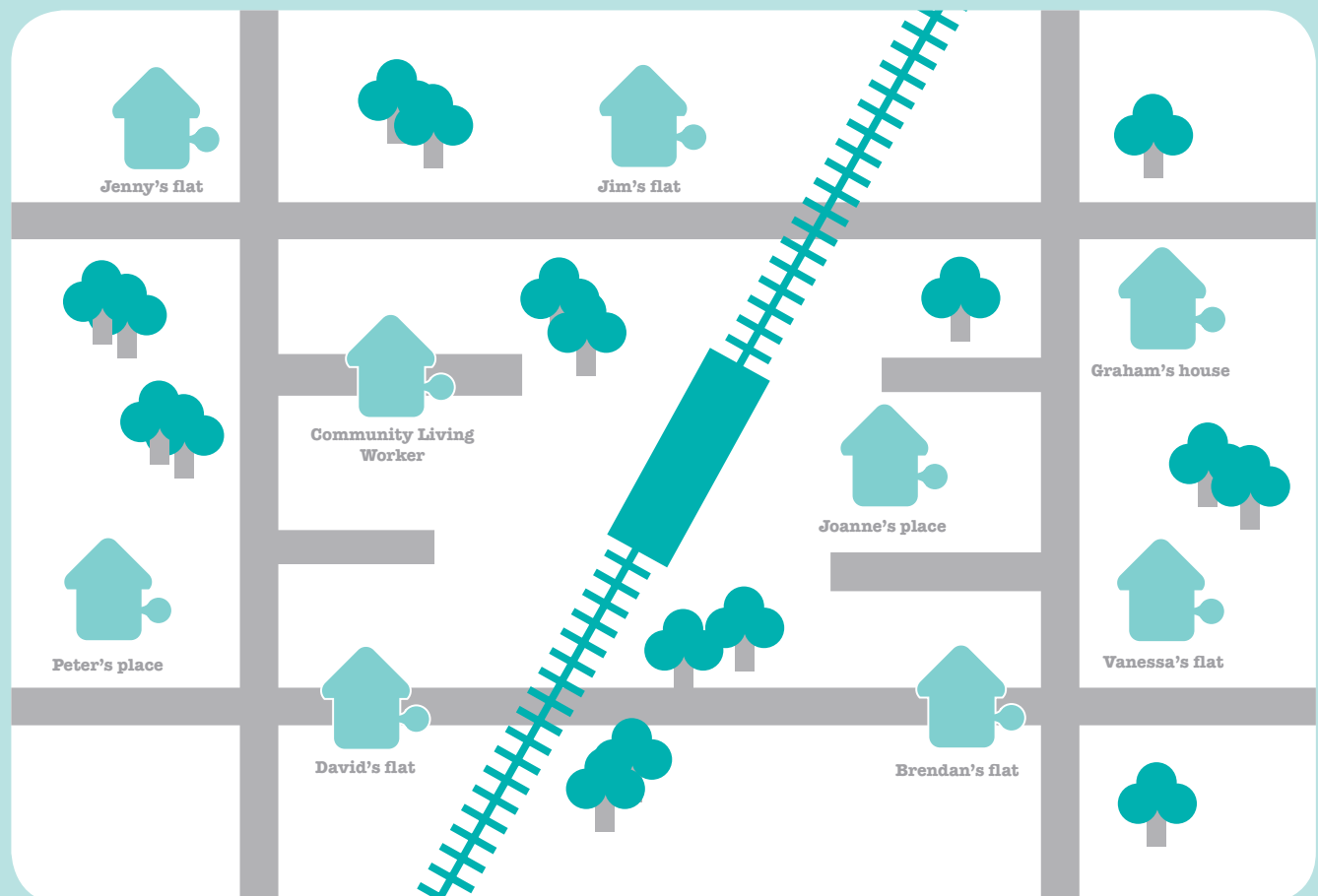
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How Neighbourhood Connections works

A unique system of support

Neighbourhood Connections is a unique system of support, designed to make the best use of members' own abilities.

A small number of properties are scattered around a neighbourhood. You can walk, or catch public transport easily from one property to another. One property is occupied by a Neighbourhood Connections Worker, who works part time on a flexible basis. Network members live in the other properties, and Neighbourhood Connections gives them support from each other, the Neighbourhood Connections Worker, and the wider community.



Neighbourhood Connections Values

What we believe

Neighbourhood Connections recognises that people have a variety of abilities and needs. All people have a right to control their own lives in their own homes and are entitled to support which enables them to do so.

The values that count.

Neighbourhood Connections:

- > Exists to enable Neighbourhood Connections members (people supported by Neighbourhood Connections) to exercise choice in and take responsibility for their own homes
- > Regards people with a disability as individuals with unique qualities, abilities and experience
- > Believes that these qualities, abilities and experiences can be valuable assets to the member, to other network members supported by Neighbourhood Connections and the community at large
- > Believes that all people are resourceful and have potential for developmental growth. These capacities need to be acknowledged by services if people are truly to live ‘independently’
- > Believes that informal sources of support, like those found in neighbourhoods, are just as important as structured support provided by specialist agencies



- > Believes that Neighbourhood Connections members have the right to make choices about their lives even when these choices, and the risks which may be involved, conflict with the judgements of Community Living Workers, and also understands that Neighbourhood Connections members need information and carefully considered support to safely exercise this right of choice
- > Is committed to reaching those who might benefit from living in a supported network.

How these **values** are used in practice

Neighbourhood Connections shows these values in practice, by:

- > Listening to Neighbourhood Connections members
- > Facilitating members' personal growth and development
- > Working to transfer resources and decision-making power to members
- > Strengthening communities
- > Helping people with disabilities advocate for themselves
- > Developing information and communications technology that enables members and support people.
- > Sharing information and knowledge to learn from experience

Neighbourhood Connections organisational practices support these values:

- > Collaborating and working positively with other organisations to get the best outcomes
- > Building partnerships
- > Maintaining an open mind, accepting defined risks, continually learning from experience and improving, and investing in people's development
- > Being proactive in partnership building
- > Using resources prudently and providing a cost effective service
- > Developing structures that enhance the role of people
Neighbourhood Connections supports
- > Seeking continuous improvement in all areas of operations – accepting defined risks and learning from mistakes
- > Ensuring flexibility in working arrangements to adapt to change.



Meeting the needs of a wide spectrum of people

Neighbourhood Connections may not suit everyone. Some people need more support. But among the Network Members that can be supported by Neighbourhood Connections there is a very wide spectrum of need.

To live in a Neighbourhood Connections network, people need to be able to look after their personal care or have the support to do so. They also need some skills in cooking, shopping, and cleaning their home. Some people may only have minimal domestic skills. Some may move in with little experience with money handling.



The KeyRing Network in the United Kingdom found that motivation and determination to be independent are the deciding factors in whether his kind of housing works for someone. Network Members have shown remarkable creativity in filling skills gaps. For example, two Network Members swap cooking for housework – a brilliant solution to two problems.

Neighbourhood Connections will work alongside other agencies who may choose to put in more support at the beginning of someone's tenancy.

Neighbourhood Connections will work well for those who are relatively capable, have sensory impairments or physical disabilities, and those with challenging behaviours. Those who choose to do so will have additional support from specialist agencies to help them achieve their goals.



The easiest way to find out if Neighbourhood Connections might suit you, your family member or client is to talk to us. Neighbourhood Connections will assess whether it can work. Our assessment process works in partnership with the prospective Network Member, the referrer, and anyone else important to the Network Member to make a balanced assessment of eligibility and risk.



Neighbourhood Connections

Balancing empowerment and risk-taking with safety and support

Neighbourhood Connections is an adaptation of KeyRing's 'Living Supported Networks'. KeyRing Networks have operated successfully in the United Kingdom for over fifteen years. In a Neighbourhood Connections network a small group of people with a disability live in their own homes scattered around a neighbourhood. A Neighbourhood Connections Worker lives at the centre of the Network providing support for all members. Tenants can walk or catch public transport to see each other and the Worker, making the proximity of the flats critical – not too near, not too far. Neighbourhood Connections builds multiple levels of support around each tenant and will take the principles and key practices from KeyRing's work and adapt them to the Victorian environment

Neighbourhood Connections sets out two main objectives related to housing and support services:

- For people with a disability to have greater choice and control over where and how they live, and
- For people with a disability to lead full and purposeful lives within their community, and to develop a range of friendships, activities and relationships.

If you want to find a community supported living arrangement which:

- > Meets the high standards you demand
- > Enables you to see the ideals of valuing people put into practice
- > Insists on real rights for those supported – including tenancy rights
- > Knows how to connect people to community
- > Enables members to lead full and purposeful lives
- > Works in partnership with you and other agencies
- > Maximises independence
- > Balances empowerment and risk with safety and support
- > Promotes development of friendships, activities and relationships
- > Promotes equal opportunity

NEIGHBOURHOOD CONNECTIONS CAN HELP YOU!

People who move into a Neighbourhood Connections network may be;

- > From CRUs, hostels and other supported situations
- > From the homes of carers – especially elderly relatives
- > From independent accommodation where a person hasn't coped (often because of isolation and lack of readily available support).



It's Neighbourhood Connections' job to make sure;

- > Network members know their responsibility to pay rent, bills and meet other tenancy obligations (e.g. the upkeep of the home, house inspections)
- > Advice, emotional support and reassurance is given to Network Members in the network
- > Each Network Member knows their Community Living Worker well
- > It builds up links with local people and organisations and encourages Network Members to make use of good will, neighbourliness, and facilities in their community
- > Support is given to Network Members to make connections in their local community, (i.e. where to get a coffee, where to pay the electricity bill)
- > Encouragement is given to members to help and support each other in solving problems and sharing knowledge
- > The Community Living Worker supports and organises monthly network meetings
- > The network is regularly evaluated to improve practice.



Neighbourhood Connections

Principles

- > I choose who I live with
- > I choose where I live
- > I choose who supports me
- > I choose how I am supported
- > I choose what happens in my own home
- > I have my own home
- > I make friendships with people on my own terms
- > I am supported to be healthy and safe on my terms
- > I have the same rights and responsibilities as other citizens

Neighbourhood Connections:

Providing long-term, flexible, easily accessible supports –
making support available in the way people want it, when they want it

Putting people's own abilities at the centre of their support –
recognising that people are capable and resourceful

Making the community connection – helping people to make connections with each other, with neighbours, work colleagues, community associations and generic services

Supporting people to make the break from a reliance on family and/or 24 hour care – opening the way for people to take their place as citizens and active members of the community.

Neighbourhood Connections – Helping people find a better quality of life

A group of organisations lead by Marillac House comprises: City of Stonnington, Inner South East Partners in Community Health, Access for All Abilities, Supported Housing Ltd, IMPACT, Jacquard Projects, Disability Opportunities Victoria and Northern Support Services.

