



THE NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME AND MENTAL HEALTH

WHAT SERVICES CAN I CHOOSE?

This information has been prepared to explain the new National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). It has been produced by the Mental Health Council of Australia (MHCA), in partnership with the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum (NMHCCF).

This is one of several resources on the NDIS we have produced for mental health consumers, their families and carers. Others include:

- The National Disability Insurance Scheme and mental health: Introducing the National Disability Insurance Scheme
- The National Disability Insurance Scheme and mental health: Am I eligible for support?
- The National Disability Insurance Scheme and mental health: Achieving your goals?

THE NDIS AIMS TO
DELIVER BETTER
SUPPORT FOR
PEOPLE WITH
A DISABILITY

WHAT IS THE NDIS?

The NDIS aims to deliver better support for people with a disability. It is administered by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA). The scheme is government-funded and its services are free. The scheme offers exciting new opportunities for people who are eligible for NDIS services, including people with a psychosocial (or psychiatric) disability.

The NDIS will offer basic information and referral for all people with a psychosocial disability. But for some people with a psychosocial disability, the NDIS will also offer a much higher level of assistance in the form of a **personal support plan**. Not all people with a psychosocial disability will be eligible for this level of assistance. If you would like to know more about who might be eligible please see our resource: *The National Disability Insurance Scheme and mental health – Am I eligible for support?*

In summary, to be eligible for a personal support plan from the NDIS you must be aged under 65 when you apply and be an Australian citizen, permanent resident or the holder of a special visa. You must also have a significant disability that impacts on your life in a big way, and that disability must be permanent.

WHAT'S A PERSONAL SUPPORT PLAN?

A personal support plan is all about helping a person with a disability to achieve his or her life goals. Life goals are people's hopes and plans for the future. Identifying their goals helps people to determine what supports they might need to assist them to live as they choose and as independently as possible. The NDIS aims to assist each person with a disability to obtain these supports.

Each person's goals will be different. A person may want more independence, to find a job, to be more financially secure, to have more involvement in the community, to travel to appointments independently or make friends more easily.

A personal support plan will describe how different people and service providers will work together to help achieve these goals.

For more information about personal support plans please see our resource: *The National Disability Insurance Scheme and mental health – Achieving your goals*.

In summary, you get to control your personal support plan and make decisions about the sorts of services you want and who should provide these. Supports may come from a range of different service providers.

If you need help making decisions about what services you require, the NDIS will involve others (including carers) in decision-making. As far as possible you will be given choice and control over the funding for your supports. If you are unable to manage this responsibility, the NDIS may appoint someone else to manage it for you, such as your carer or a community organisation.

SO WHAT SORTS OF SERVICES CAN I GET THROUGH MY PERSONAL SUPPORT PLAN?

All sorts.

It might be best to begin with what you *can't* get from the NDIS. You cannot get clinical services or other sorts of services that you currently get from the health system, such as psychiatry services, sessions with a clinical psychologist, medications and so forth. These will continue to be provided by the health system.

But the NDIS may be able to provide many other services that will help you achieve your goals. Because the scheme is so new, it is not yet clear exactly what services may or may not be included in personal support plans, and the MHCA is working with the NDIA to clarify this.

Below we have listed some of the kinds of supports that could be covered under the new scheme, as well as some examples.

1. Help dealing with the health system and managing medical treatments

- Help making medical appointments
- Transport to and from appointments
- Support with decision-making so you make the right sorts of medical decisions

2. Domestic assistance

- Help with cleaning, cooking or washing
- Someone to help you do the shopping
- Help maintaining personal hygiene
- Assistance looking after your pets

3. Support building and maintaining social relationships

- Help finding a social club you like
- Transport to and from community events
- Support connecting with other people
- Assistance joining and participating in a local sport

4. Help with communication

- Assistance learning how to use technology – e.g. Internet, Facebook etc.
- Classes to help you build confidence and speak in groups

5. Health and wellbeing programs that help you function better

- Programs to help you manage drugs or alcohol
- Massage, meditation or yoga

6. Help beginning or changing a career

- Vocational guidance
- Assistance commencing and completing a training or skills course
- Transport to job interviews or work

7. Help with financial management

- Support from a financial counsellor
- An advocate to help you solve debt problems

8. Help maintaining living arrangements

- Tenancy support if you are trying to negotiate with a landlord or a flatmate
- Supported residential accommodation

9. Transport to help you engage with community or live independently

- Going to a concert
- Attending a book club
- Going ten-pin bowling

10. Coordinating supports

- Assistance to coordinate non-medical supports
- Assistance setting up appointments or reminding carers to attend.

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THE MHCA
UNDERSTANDS
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CHALLENGES

WHO WILL MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT WHICH OF THESE SERVICES I AM ABLE TO ACCESS?

You will.

The NDIA aims to ensure that, to the maximum extent possible, people with a disability make decisions about what services they receive and which service providers are chosen to deliver these.

The NDIA determines what is and is not a reasonable level of support, but each person's support plan will be developed to achieve that person's goals. There will be a limit to the amount available to fund each personal support plan, but it is likely that the NDIA will result in more, not fewer, supports for people with a disability.

If people are not happy with decisions made by the NDIA they can ask for an internal review of these decisions. Under certain conditions, people will also have the right to seek a review of the decision by the independent Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

ISSUES FOR FAMILIES AND CARERS

The NDIA recognises that many people with a psychosocial disability receive important support from their families and carers. It is designed to provide the supports necessary to enable families and/or carers to continue to play this role.

The NDIA aims to support carers – whether or not they are family members – so that they can continue to provide care. While it does not pay carers directly for their work, it may be able to pay for training that will help carers maintain or improve their care. The NDIA might also fund other supports that make life easier for carers, such as respite.

The MHCA understands there will be some challenges in this area. Many people with a psychosocial disability may prefer to get all their supports from their families or carers and may be very reluctant to accept care from other agencies. At the same time, their families and carers may be in desperate need of support themselves.

The NDIA will take all reasonable steps to appropriately involve families and carers in decision-making and planning. But where there is any conflict between the views of the person with a psychosocial disability and the views of that person's family and/or carer, the scheme must favour the person with a disability. The exception to this would be where the person with a disability does not have the capacity to exercise sound judgement. In these situations, the NDIA may appoint another person, such as their carer, to make decisions or exercise choice on their behalf.

The NDIA has developed an excellent checklist www.careraustralia.com.au/storage/NDIS%20Carer%20Checklist_Final%20for%20website.pdf to help carers think about how the scheme can support them and the people for whom they care.

HOW CAN I BE PREPARED?

It is a good idea to start thinking about your goals and about the help you would need to achieve them. You might like to discuss this with your family and carers.

Here are some questions to get you started:

- What are my life goals?
- To achieve these goals, what supports would I need?
- What supports would help my carer continue to provide me with care?
- If I had to prioritise amongst these different supports, how would I decide which supports are the most important?
- How would I choose between different service providers? What sort of service do I expect from a service provider that is receiving funding that I control?
- Are there supports I am already getting that I really like? Are there supports that I am already getting that I don't like?
- What do I need to tell NDIA staff to ensure that my personal support plan is built around me and my needs?



MAKING THE NDIS WORK FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Everyone has a role in making the NDIS a success. If you have a story you would like to share about your experience with the NDIS, please get in contact with the MHCA. We will protect your confidentiality, but it may help if we can use your stories (without your names) in our efforts to make sure that the NDIS meets the needs of people with mental health issues. If changes are needed to the NDIS in the interests of people with mental health issues, then the MHCA will work with governments and the NDIA to advocate for those changes.

If you have a story you would like to share, or would like more information on the NDIS, you could contact:

- **The Mental Health Council of Australia** – phone 02 62853100 or visit www.mhca.org.au
- **The National Disability Insurance Agency** – phone 1800 800 110 or visit www.ndis.gov.au
- **Carers Australia** – phone 02 61229900 or visit www.carersaustralia.com.au
- **National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum** – phone 02 62853100 or email nmhccf@mhca.org.au

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ABOUT THE MHCA

The Mental Health Council of Australia (MHCA) is the peak, national non-government organisation representing and promoting the interests of the Australian mental health sector. We're committed to achieving better mental health for all Australians.

The MHCA aims to promote mentally healthy communities, educate Australians on mental health issues, conduct research into mental health issues and reform Australia's mental health system.

ABOUT THE NMHCCF

The National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum is the combined national voice for consumers and carers participating in the development of mental health policy and sector development in Australia.

Through its membership, the NMHCCF gives mental health consumers and carers the opportunity to meet, form partnerships and be involved in the development and implementation of mental health reform.



NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH
CONSUMER & CARER FORUM

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www.nmhccf.org.au*