

HOW DO I SUPPORT PEOPLE IN RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE TO DEVELOP A GREAT NDIS PLAN?



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This resource is for staff working in residential aged care, who have residents aged under 65 years who are eligible for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). It can be used alongside two of our comprehensive guides, which offer more detail on the NDIS planning process and provide a template for completing pre-planning preparation. Although the guides are specifically written for staff and patients within the health sector, the NDIS processes remain the same and many of the ideas for how to engage people at the planning stage will be relevant to you in the aged care setting.

1. Getting ready for NDIS planning - a client resource which offers detail on the NDIS planning process, and provides a planning template that patients and their families/carers can use to prepare for their NDIS planning meeting.

2. NDIS and Health working together - a staff resource with NDIS information relating to each stage of the patient pathway, from admission to hospital discharge, including how to support people to anticipate changes in health status and support needs.

For both these resources see:

summerfoundation.org.au/resources/dhhs-toolkit

Please note that in this resource, the term 'resident' refers primarily to the person with disability, but also refers to people that provide support or representation to the person with disability, including friends, family, carers, advocates or guardians.

What is the staff role in NDIS planning for residents?

Having a great NDIS plan requires work. There is a lot of preparation that needs to take place before your resident attends the NDIS planning meeting.

People with disabilities may require support from aged care staff to complete pre-planning activities and to act as advocates during the NDIS planning process. There are a number of reasons you have a valuable role in the pre-planning process for your residents:

- You have a good knowledge of the resident's health and disability
- You have a good knowledge of the resident's personal likes and dislikes
- The resident trusts you and is comfortable communicating with you

- You are skilled at liaising with the resident's family, friends or other supporters
- You are skilled at setting goals and discussing support options with residents
- You have a professional duty of care.

What do I need to know about the NDIS planning process?

The resident will meet with the NDIS or a Local Area Coordinator

After the resident has been notified that they are eligible for the NDIS, they will be contacted by the NDIS or a Local Area Coordinator to schedule a time for a 60-90 minute planning meeting. The resident will typically be offered a face-to-face meeting with an NDIS representative, which may take place at the aged care facility, at an NDIS office, or at another location. On some occasions, the resident may be offered a telephone meeting in place of a face-to-face meeting.

TIP: Ask for the type of planning meeting that will suit your resident.

It is important that in the planning meeting the resident feels safe and freely able to express their thoughts and goals. If the resident would prefer a face-to-face meeting, it is perfectly acceptable to request one, at a location in which the resident feels comfortable. Encourage the resident to let others know how they would like to be engaged in the planning meeting. At the resident's request, you and/or the resident's family or friends may act as their advocate in liaising with the NDIS.

The resident can invite others to attend their planning meeting

While the NDIS will usually schedule the planning meeting directly with the resident, it may be useful for the resident to invite at least one support person to attend the meeting. Having additional people at the support meeting can assist the resident to:

- Clarify and understand the planning process
- Identify supports and set goals
- Document any information that the planner/Local Area Coordinator provides
- Ascertain next steps in the NDIS pathway.

TIP: Identify whether the resident needs support during the meeting.

Ask your resident if they would like to invite someone to attend the meeting. The resident might decide to invite a family member, friend, advocate and/or a facility staff member to attend the planning meeting.

Pre-planning is key

In our experience, if people don't put time and effort into the pre-planning process, they will not be adequately prepared for their planning meeting, and their NDIS plan may fall short in terms of supporting them to achieve their individual goals.

At the NDIS planning meeting, the resident will usually meet face-to-face with either an NDIS planner or a Local Area Coordinator to discuss what sort of support they are already accessing, and what sort of support they might like to access in the future. The planning meeting presents the most important, and often only, opportunity for residents to talk about what they would like to achieve in their lives, and the types of funded supports that they would like the NDIS to provide.

TIP: Start pre-planning activities early.

Don't leave pre-planning activities until the day before the planning meeting! Start talking to your residents early about the types of things they would like to achieve and the types of funded supports they might need in order to put those goals into place. In our Getting ready for NDIS planning resource, there is a template that you can complete with the resident and their families/carers, which can form a great basis for the NDIS planning discussion. We have also provided links to other planning tools that you might like to try with your residents.

summerfoundation.org.au/resources/dhhs-toolkit

TIP: Be as detailed as possible.

For the planning meeting, your resident will need to be armed with as much information as possible about the types of supports that will enable them to live the life that they want. When speaking to the resident, consider the full range of support options including care, equipment, continence, behaviour support, and home and vehicle modifications. Remember that residents may not be aware of many of the support options that are available – they might therefore rely on you to provide information about the types of aids or services that may be new to the market, or may align with their functional capacity. You may also play a role in supporting people to obtain quotes from allied health providers for the hours required to complete necessary assessments for equipment, home modifications and/or vehicle modifications. These quotes should then be taken to the meeting.

Residents have 'choice and control' over the planning process

Instead of providing the funding that they *think* will improve people's lives, the NDIS recognises that people with disability will have better outcomes if they can *choose* the types of supports that are meaningful and relevant for them. The NDIS also provides participants with their choice of service providers, and the control over how they will manage the funding in their plans. This means that once a resident has an approved plan in place they may be responsible for finding someone who can provide the service specified in the plan, or finding somewhere to purchase the aids or equipment in their plan. It also may mean that the resident or their representative is responsible for collecting invoices from service providers and organising payments for services and equipment received.

TIP: Identify whether your resident requires support to make decisions.

Choice and control is an important focus of the NDIS system, however residents can often find it overwhelming and/or challenging to undertake sourcing and payment of service providers. Ask if your resident has a family member or friend that they would like to nominate as someone to support them in making NDIS decisions. Alternatively, people might need some extra support by connecting with a disability advocate. For information on how advocates can support people with disability, go to:

summerfoundation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/What-are-advocates-and-how-can-they-help-me.pdf

Support coordinators can assist residents to implement their plans

A support coordinator can help a resident to understand their NDIS plan, as well as organise access to supports in the plan and to monitor funding once the plan is in place. Residents can request funded access to a support coordinator, which will appear in their plan as a line item with a set number of hours over the duration of the plan.

TIP: Consider the benefit of having a support coordinator.

If you feel that your resident would benefit from working with a support coordinator, encourage them to request one during the planning meeting. It will give the NDIS planner or Local Area Coordinator a chance to ensure that hours for support coordination are listed as part of your resident's plan.

Residents can choose their own support coordinator

A support coordinator can be chosen from the NDIS list of registered support coordinators. For a list of support coordinators in your area, go to:

[ndis.gov.au/document/finding-and-engaging-providers/find-registered-service-providers](https://www.ndis.gov.au/document/finding-and-engaging-providers/find-registered-service-providers)

It may be useful to discuss the following with the resident to assist them to choose a support coordinator:

- Is there a person or organisation that you have worked with before?
- Is there someone with specialist knowledge that you would like to work with?
- Does the support coordinator understand your needs, listen to you and explain things clearly?
- Is the support coordinator a good problem solver?
- Does the support coordinator have a waiting list?

If your resident does not identify a preferred support coordinator during the planning meeting, the NDIS will allocate one that might not meet your resident's needs.

TIP: Assist residents to choose a support coordinator.

If your resident would like to request access to a support coordinator, they will need to choose someone who can provide this support and to have their details ready to provide to the planner/Local Area Coordinator at the planning meeting.

For more information on how to choose a support coordinator, see our fact sheet 'Support Coordinators: Who are they and what can they do to support me?'

summerfoundation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Support-Coordinators.pdf

Supports must be 'reasonable and necessary'

NDIS will fund supports that are considered to be 'reasonable and necessary' for the individual. In order to be considered reasonable and necessary, a support must:

- Be related to the participant's **disability** (not a 'health condition')
- Assist a participant **achieve the specified goals** outlined in their participant statement
- Facilitate the participant's **social and economic participation**
- Represent **value for money**, relative to benefits achieved, and cost of alternative support
- Be considered **good practice** and likely to be a benefit to the participant
- Be **unreasonable for families, carers**, networks, and the community to provide
- **Not be the responsibility of another** government sector (e.g. health, housing, education).

TIP: Consult the COAG guide on 'Principles to determine the responsibility of the NDIS and other service systems'.

There is a guide developed by the Council of Australian Governments, which delineates some of the responsibilities of the NDIS system in comparison with the health or aged care systems. When speaking to residents, the COAG guide might help you in understanding whether funding for an item or a service lies with the NDIS, or another service system.

coag.gov.au/sites/default/files/communique/NDIS-Principles-to-Determine-Responsibilities-NDIS-and-Other-Service.pdf

Supports must be related to goals

It can be difficult to provide information to residents about exactly what the NDIS will fund as part of their plan. Essentially, the NDIS will fund supports that meet the criteria for 'reasonable and necessary' and that relate to a person's goals.

The planning session involves thinking about goals and identifying support related to the goals. In our experience, people usually have only two or three broad goals listed in their plan, which are then reviewed and revised after a 12-month period.

TIP: Talk about goals in terms of what is important to your resident.

You might find that residents have trouble thinking of their lives in terms of what their goals are for the future. Often people just don't think in this structured way about their lives, but also younger people with disability who are living in aged care often report that they are seldom asked about what they want to achieve in life. Discuss goals with residents in areas that are meaningful to them. You might like, for example, to talk to people in terms of what they enjoy or what they look forward to most. Prompt them to consider their social life, family relationships, hobbies and interests, living arrangements, employment and study.

TIP: Identify broad goals to maximise flexibility of the plan.

Supporting residents to identify goals and related supports should not be a process of brainstorming every item or service that the resident would like to buy, and forming a personal disability 'wish list'. Rather, you will find it far more useful to support your resident to explore short, medium and long-term goals and identify the broad steps required to achieve them. If you can document goals in a broad way, rather than being too specific, it can allow for flexibility in the implementation of the plan. Broad goals will also mean that there will be a wider range of supports that could be relevant to achieving the goal.

For example;

- 'I want to remain fit and healthy' rather than 'I want to go the gym each week'
- 'I want to be more connected to the community', rather than 'I want to go out or a coffee every week'.

Steps to achieve this:

Once broad goals have been identified, you might find it useful to support the resident to break each one down to smaller segments in order to help identify exactly what support is required in order to achieve the goal. Prompt the resident to think about each step, and the supports that would be needed in order to put that step into action. For example, where the broad NDIS goal might be 'I want to be more connected to the community', the resident might be prompted to consider:

- What would this look like? Would it include a trip to the football every week? Is that important to you?

- What else might 'being connected to the community' look like to you?
- How would you get to the football and other places? Would you need a support person to be there? For how many hours would you need a support person for a trip to the football?
- Is there any equipment, other aids or support that would make it possible to get ready in the morning and go to the football? Consider mobility, communication, social interaction, and self-care.
- How will you know if you've achieved your goals?

It might feel like quite a journey, but you've ensured that your resident is ready to meet with a NDIS planner or Local Area Coordinator to discuss their needs and goals for the future. You have supported your resident to develop and implement a great NDIS plan.



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We value your feedback about this resource – please contact the Summer Foundation at info@summerfoundation.org.au, or 1300 626 560.

Connect with us: