

Ways of working with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

A practice resource for public clinical mental health services

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Project Control Group members involved in the development of the resource included:

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This resource will be reviewed and updated to reflect practice changes and developments as the NDIS transitions to full Scheme.

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Introduction

About the NDIS

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is the new way of providing individualised support for Australians living with a disability, their families and carers, including people with a psychosocial disability due to a mental health condition.

The NDIS is available to people who have a permanent impairment and need lifelong support to undertake activities of daily living and participate in the social and economic life of the community.

The NDIS is being implemented by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) in collaboration with its NDIS partners - Local Area Coordination (LAC) and Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) services.

The NDIS is jointly funded by the Commonwealth and state and territory governments across Australia.

In Victoria, a range of NDIS funded supports will replace selected state funded Mental Health Community Support Services (Individualised Client Support Packages, Adult Residential Rehabilitation and selected Supported Accommodation Services) as the Scheme is introduced across Victoria.

Readiness for change

The NDIS is a major national social reform which will work alongside existing government service systems.

The way the NDIS will work with mainstream service systems is governed by a set of principles that define funding and practice responsibilities. Consistent with these principles, Victoria's public clinical mental health services will continue to provide assessment, diagnosis and treatment of mental health conditions, as well as work closely with the NDIS to plan and coordinate care for consumers requiring both treatment and psychosocial disability support services.

Public clinical mental health services will need to work closely with the NDIA, LAC partners and funded NDIS providers to support eligible consumers, families and carers at each step in the NDIS pathway and ensure seamless, integrated planning and coordinated supports, referrals and transitions.

Victoria has been funded by the Commonwealth Government through the Sector Development Fund (SDF) for the Specialist Clinical Mental Health and NDIS Collaboration Project (SDF Mental Health Project) which aims to support public clinical mental health services to get ready for the NDIS.

The SDF Mental Health Project is auspiced by Austin Health and is being implemented in partnership with Melbourne Health and St Vincent's Hospital. The purpose of the SDF Mental Health Project is to support public clinical mental health services to build an effective operational interface with the NDIS to ensure eligible consumers experience easy, timely access to NDIS supports and coordinated planning, support implementation and plan review.

The practice approaches, operating protocols, guidelines and learnings from the SDF Mental Health Project will be provided to health services in Victoria to assist them to proactively prepare for the NDIS as it is progressively rolled out.

Development of the resource

The *Ways of working with NDIS* practice resource was developed following a co-design process with area mental health services staff, clinical leaders and mental health managers, consumers and carers and staff from the NDIA and LAC (Brotherhood of St Laurence). It identifies the key areas where mental health practice will interface with the NDIS.

The co-design process identified: future best practice for clinical mental health and NDIS services; key gaps between current practice and the desired future practice; and the organisational practices needed to support NDIS related activities, practices and processes.

The co-design process identified:

- **Knowledge** - how clinical mental health staff in a variety of service settings could acquire knowledge of NDIS and the NDIS pathway
- **Translation** - what is required to support staff to use this new knowledge in their work
- **Choice and control** - how clinical mental health staff could empower consumers and carers to exercise choice and control as NDIS participants.
- **Partnerships** – what clinical mental health services need to put in place to support local partnerships with the NDIA, LAC and NDIS funded providers.

Scope

The *Ways of working with NDIS* practice resource is intended for frontline staff in adult public clinical mental health services to support them to build their knowledge and practice across the NDIS pathway. It articulates:

- activities and practices for the clinical mental health workforce to support consumers across the NDIS pathway
- NDIS related outcomes from a consumer and carer/family perspective
- supportive practices that mental health clinicians can employ to work towards these outcomes.

The *New ways of working with the NDIS* practice resource will also support frontline staff in the clinical mental health workforce to plan their professional development and reflect on their practice individually, in teams and in supervision, as it relates to the NDIS.

The practice resource will inform the development of new NDIS eLearning Modules and Training Resources that can be accessed by specialist clinical mental health service staff for self-paced online learning.

The NDIS pathway

The NDIS pathway for people participating in scheme has the following key domains:

- helping to understand the NDIS and think about becoming a participant
- supporting consumers to make an access request to the NDIS
- supporting consumers to get ready for first plan discussion with the NDIA
- supporting the plan discussion with the NDIA planner
- supporting plan implementation and the annual review process
- supporting an understanding of and participation in a 'change in circumstance' review process.

Within each of these domains supportive practices have been identified to guide the practice, decision making and actions frontline clinical mental health staff will undertake when supporting consumers, families and carers on the NDIS pathway.

Implementation supports

As part of the SDF Mental Health Project, a range of tools will be developed and made available to public clinical mental health services to support the implementation of this practice resource, including:

- NDIS eLearning Modules and Training Resources to build knowledge and practices that support consumers and their carers to access and effectively participate in the NDIS
- an implementation guide for health services to help build organisational and workforce readiness for the NDIS.

Public clinical mental health services are encouraged to use this resource and related tools to:

- disseminate relevant materials to the workers to build their awareness of the NDIS and its benefits to eligible consumers
- inform local training and professional development activities, as they relate to the NDIS
- support clinical supervision, by reflecting on the ways of working and supportive practice detailed in this document
- establish networks or communities of practice that allow clinicians to learn from each other over time.

Alignment

This resource has been developed with specific reference to the following key documents. The domains and supportive practices detailed in this document can be further developed and strengthened by referring to the relevant sections of these source documents.

NDIS and Mainstream Service Interface Practice Guidelines

<http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/4065870/Riset-NDIS-Practice-Guidelines/>

The Council of Australian Governments Applied Principles and Tables of Supports

<https://www.coag.gov.au/sites/default/files/communique/NDIS-Principles-to-Determine-Responsibilities-NDIS-and-Other-Service.pdf>

National Practice Standards for the Mental Health Workforce 2013

[https://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/5D7909E82304E6D2CA257C430004E877/\\$File/wkstd13.pdf](https://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/5D7909E82304E6D2CA257C430004E877/$File/wkstd13.pdf)

National framework for recovery-oriented mental health services: Guide for practitioners and providers 2013

[https://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/67D17065514CF8E8CA257C1D00017A90/\\$File/recovgde.pdf](https://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/67D17065514CF8E8CA257C1D00017A90/$File/recovgde.pdf)

Victoria's mental health workforce strategy

<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/policiesandguidelines/mental-health-workforce-strategy>

Framework for recovery-oriented practice 2011

http://recoverylibrary.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1379116/framework-recovery-oriented-practice.pdf

Overview of the work domains

Work domain 1

Helping consumers to understand the NDIS and to think about becoming a participant

1. Awareness raising
2. Working in partnership
3. Engagement
4. Maximising consumer decision-making opportunities
5. Connecting to supports

Work domain 2

Supporting consumers to make an access request to the NDIA

1. Clarifying the needs and expectations of consumers
2. Translating into the NDIS context
3. Collecting relevant evidence
4. Following up assertively

Work domain 3

Supporting consumers to get ready for first plan discussion with the NDIA

1. 'Big picture' thinking
2. Promoting choice and control
3. Collating knowledge and experience
4. Producing documentation together
5. Identifying alerts for immediacy

Work domain 4

Supporting the plan discussion with the NDIA planner

1. Facilitating involvement
2. Promoting choice and control
3. Translating knowledge and experience
4. Recommending and advising

Work domain 5

Supporting plan implementation and the annual plan review process

1. Alerting and advising
2. Supporting service integration
3. Promoting choice and control
4. Facilitating involvement
5. Producing documentation together

Work domain 6

Supporting an understanding of and participation in a 'change in circumstance' review process

1. Working in partnership
2. Communicating, coordinating, facilitating
3. Providing evidence
4. Supporting and representing

Work domain 1

Helping to understand the NDIS and think about becoming a participant

Agreed outcomes

Ways of working in this domain support the following outcomes:

- Consumers and their families/carers feel supported to understand the NDIS.
- Time is taken to progress a consumer's thinking on goals and the NDIS supports available to achieve these goals that responds to that individual's stage of change and needs.

Ways of working

1.1	<i>Awareness raising</i>	Providing a range of consumer and carer-informed information and resources on the NDIS process and available NDIS supports to build understanding.
1.2	<i>Working in partnership</i>	Supporting the consumer and their family/carer to understand the NDIS process and to nominate who should be involved.
1.3	<i>Engagement</i>	Collaborating to address barriers impeding consumers' access to the NDIS, and to increase the motivation and readiness of 'hard to engage' consumers.
1.4	<i>Maximising consumer decision-making opportunities</i>	Considering capacity for informed decision-making, individual vulnerability, nominated person involvement and supported decision making.
1.5	<i>Connecting supports</i>	Coordinating linkages to others with lived experience and/or expertise to further understanding e.g. peer support worker, carer

Supportive practices

1.6	Articulating the importance and value of social and community engagement for consumers' recovery and wellbeing, and the possibilities of the NDIS.	1.7	Explaining NDIS process and principles in plain English, emphasising hopefulness and optimism towards consumer's recovery.
1.8	Supporting and facilitating access to opportunities, resources and services that will help consumer lead a full and active life, meet their needs and attain their recovery goals.	1.9	Discussing and documenting roles and responsibilities - particularly with regard to how clinician can reduce the burden on consumer their families/carers, and the impact of having to "re-tell story".
1.10	Utilising well developed interpersonal skills to build positive collaborative relationships with consumers their families/carers.	1.11	Assisting consumers and their families/carers to make informed decisions about seeking access to the scheme by providing information, resources and other support.
1.12	Demonstrating flexibility, persistence, patience and innovation in meeting the needs of hard to engage consumers.	1.13	Using a motivational interviewing lens to support an individual through the process.
1.14	Utilising the expertise and active involvement of the lived experience workforce in engaging, informing and supporting consumers their families/carers, including both peer support workers, and consumer and carer consultants.	1.15	Identifying how factors that drive inequality (e.g. poverty, unsafe housing, social exclusion, food insecurity), co-occurring disorders, stigma and trauma can adversely impact on exercising choice and control, and may lead to poorer NDIS outcomes.
1.16	Describing how psychosocial disability may impact on the capacity to engage in NDIS processes and develops strategies to address barriers.	1.17	Using a range of professional expertise and a range of approaches and media to work with consumers' strengths and motivation.
1.18	Employing up to date practice advice and evidence to promote better outcomes for consumers their families/carers with NDIS.	1.19	Working to continually enhance knowledge of opportunities, resources and services available to support community and economic participation for consumers.
1.20	Engaging constructively with lived experience workforce and advocacy groups.	1.21	Using supervision to improve practice, manage new ways of working and complexity and seek expertise as needed.
1.22	Applying the principles of the Mental Health Act 2014 and the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.	1.23	Reviewing NDIS participation regularly.

Work domain 2

Supporting access requests to the NDIA

Agreed outcomes

Ways of working in this domain support the following outcomes:

- Support is provided as required to consumers and their families/carers to ensure the NDIS access process is as simple, clear and straightforward as possible.
- Likelihood of favourable and timely Access Request outcomes is increased.

Ways of working

2.1	<i>Clarifying needs and expectations</i>	Identifying what level of support consumers and their families/carers want in the NDIS process to guide all subsequent activity.
2.2	<i>'Translating'</i>	<p>Explaining the NDIS eligibility criteria, language and evidence requirements so it is helpful and meaningful to consumers and their families/carers.</p> <p>Adapting clinical information and knowledge of consumers and their families/carers and their lived experience into language that assists NDIA to determine eligibility.</p>
2.3	<i>Collecting relevant evidence</i>	Assembling information that addresses access eligibility criteria (i.e. confirms disability is "likely to be permanent" and functional impact on everyday living skills exists) and conveys the consumer's support needs.
2.4	<i>Following up assertively</i>	Where the consumer is ineligible, requesting clarification from the NDIA and supporting appeals if required.

Supportive practices

<p>2.5 Demonstrating knowledge and proficiency in the use of a range of collaborative practices.</p>	<p>2.6 Inquiring about and values consumers' and their families'/carers' lived experience and expertise.</p>
<p>2.7 Identifying that some NDIS related activities may be re-traumatising and stigmatising for consumers (e.g. having to reflect on and describe how their psychosocial disability has impacted on everyday life and the cumulative impact over a lifetime) and developing strategies to reduce impact.</p>	<p>2.8 Reconciling the deficit-based language of the NDIS access process with the language of recovery and the aligned NDIS principles that support community and economic participation and choice and control.</p>
<p>2.9 Facilitating the involvement of consumers and their families/carers in the NDIS participant pathway and including them in preparing, viewing and editing documentation.</p>	<p>2.10 Demonstrating an understanding of the Disability Requirements (Section 24) of the NDIS Act 2013 that inform the NDIA's <i>Operational Guidelines: Access and determine eligibility</i>.</p>
<p>2.11 Actively pursuing professional learning, supervision and development opportunities to support positive NDIS experiences for consumers, families and carers.</p>	<p>2.12 Enacting recovery values and principles in practice and upholds consumers' rights.</p>

Work domain 3

Supporting consumers to get ready for first plan discussion with the NDIA

Agreed outcomes

Ways of working in this domain support the following outcomes:

- Consumers and their families/carers are prepared and have access to tools, resources and people to support plan discussion.
- Perspectives are sought and valued.
- Likelihood of NDIS plan addressing unique needs and life-stage of consumer is increased.

Ways of working

3.1 <i>'Big picture' thinking</i>	<p>Viewing consumers in the context of their whole selves, lives and wellbeing.</p> <p>Considering “hidden” support needs not discussed due to fear of stigma or lack of validation e.g. parenting and caring roles, needs of young carers and support for co-occurring disorders.</p>
3.2 <i>Promoting choice and control</i>	<p>Supporting consumers and their families/carers to understand the NDIS plan discussion process and to nominate who should be involved.</p> <p>Building capability of consumers and their families/carers to make informed decisions about their support needs.</p> <p>Supporting consumers to identify (and justify) their own needs.</p>
3.3 <i>Collating knowledge and experience</i>	<p>Supporting consumers and their families/carers to think about and write down their goals, discuss the type and level of support needed when unwell or to self- manage and maintain wellbeing.</p> <p>Planning how meetings can be conducted and information shared to best meet consumers' needs.</p>
3.4 <i>Producing documentation together</i>	<p>Working with consumers and their families/carers to provide information that will help planners get to know them and their needs (without having to re-tell their story unnecessarily).</p> <p>Incorporating useful existing documentation e.g. Advanced Care Statements, Wellness and Recovery Action Plans.</p>
3.5 <i>Identifying alerts for immediacy</i>	<p>Taking action to request accelerated planning for time critical support when required.</p>

Supportive practices

<p>3.1 Promoting consumers' choice and personal agency by eliciting and responding to consumers' unique wishes, needs, cultural values and circumstances.</p>	<p>3.2 Articulating the role of clinical services in awareness raising, education and advocacy about the compounded stigma experienced by parents with mental illness.</p>
<p>3.3 Demonstrating understanding of different age-related and developmental stages and transgenerational impact of psychosocial disability.</p>	<p>3.4 Supporting consumers to make decisions about their lives and mental health care in accordance with their unique values, strengths, needs, goals and circumstances.</p>
<p>3.5 Seeking to understand and respect consumers' point of view as well as their definitions of needs.</p>	<p>3.6 Through supported decision-making activities supporting consumers to identify needs and aspirations and articulate goals.</p>
<p>3.7 Developing knowledge of opportunities for meaningful social engagement, education and employment in consumers' local communities.</p>	<p>3.8 Utilising evidence-based approaches which can help support consumers' community participation and recovery goals.</p>
<p>3.9 Acknowledging, valuing and responding to consumers' and their families'/carers' lived experience in planning preparation.</p>	<p>3.10 Supporting consumers to exercise their rights and make decisions about their mental health, wellbeing and lives.</p>
<p>3.11 Inviting collaborative approaches to working with consumers and their support networks.</p>	

Work domain 4

Supporting the plan discussion with the NDIA planner

Agreed outcomes

Ways of working in this domain support the following outcomes:

- The planning conversation and those who are involved in it works for the person.
- There is respectful engagement and access to planning support for consumer and their family/carers.
- Consumer is able to speak out and to be heard.
- Family/carer is listened to and heard.
- Plan acknowledges episodic nature of psychosocial disability; built-in fluidity enables supports to increase in response to a change in consumer's needs.

Ways of working

4.1 <i>Facilitates involvement</i>	Supporting consumers and their families/carers to express their needs and to participate in NDIS planning meetings and processes. Sharing strategies on how to best engage and support consumer in NDIS planning meetings.
4.2 <i>Promoting choice and control</i>	Supporting and building capability of and their families/carers to exercise choice and control throughout the NDIS planning process and to make informed decisions about their support needs.
4.3 <i>Translating knowledge and experience</i>	Framing clinical information and existing documentation and plans for NDIA planners that manage the tension between recovery orientation and functional impairment, and what is important 'to' and what is important 'for' consumers and their families/carers.
4.4 <i>Recommending and advising</i>	Using NDIS knowledge, clinical expertise and familiarity with consumers' and their families'/carers' lived experience to identify and justify their identified needs for funded supports.

Supportive practices

4.5 Modifying the environment and processes to create a supportive space in which people feel safe and secure.	4.6 Assisting consumers to meet their needs and attain their recovery goals by communicating, coordinating and collaborating effectively with NDIS and addressing barriers to receiving supports.
4.7 Facilitating consumers' self-advocacy and advocating on consumers' behalf when required.	4.8 Ensuring consumers are able to exercise optimal choice, personal agency and flexibility.
4.9 Articulating and promoting consumer's right and ability to contribute in meaningful ways in the community and in social settings of their choosing.	4.10 Applying the principles of supported decision to assist consumers' self-determination, decision making and informed risk taking, without compromising safety.
4.11 Partnering with consumers to support and sustain their existing resources, assets, networks and relationships.	4.12 Articulating evidence based interventions that can be recommended for plans, including support for family and caring roles.

Work domain 5

Supporting plan implementation and the annual plan review process

Agreed outcomes

Ways of working in this domain support the following outcomes:

- Consumers and their families/carers are satisfied with the supports received through the plan.
- The plan review process and those who are involved in it works for the person.
- There is respectful engagement and access to planning support for consumers and their families/carers.
- Consumer is able to speak out and be heard in the annual review process.
- Families/carers are listened to and heard.
- Plan is responsive to needs and involves effective collaboration between consumer, their NDIS support and clinical mental health.

Ways of working

5.1 <i>Alerting and advising</i>	Supporting consumers to request a review of their NDIS Plan where the type and amount of supports in the Plan are not adequate. Using NDIS knowledge, clinical expertise and familiarity with consumers and their families/carers lived experience to identify and justify their identified needs for funded supports.
5.2 <i>Supporting service integration</i>	Collaborating to trouble shoot issues and promote continuity in care during plan implementation. Supporting consumers to resolve points of crisis and delivery issues, including coordinating a rapid increase in supports when required.
5.3 <i>Promoting choice and control</i>	Supporting and building the capability of consumers and their families/carers to make informed decisions about their support needs in the review process.
5.4 <i>Facilitating involvement</i>	Planning how meetings can be conducted and information shared to best meet consumer's needs. Supporting consumers and their families/carers to express their needs and to participate in NDIS planning meetings and processes. Participating in annual plan review meetings if requested.
5.5 <i>Producing documentation together</i>	Assisting consumers and their families/carers to prepare for annual plan review process. Revisiting documentation from last plan, updates and incorporates relevant new information.

Supportive practices

5.6	Establishing and maintaining current information on NDIS processes and resources and tools that support review, planning and implementation.	5.7	Using excellent interpersonal and communication skills to foster trust and respect between services to support consumer's goals and recovery.
5.8	Practicing supported decision making.	5.9	Applying collaborative approaches to working with consumers and their support networks.
5.10	Networking and building partnerships with service providers to ensure that consumers are supported to meet their needs.	5.11	Actively protects and promotes consumers' and their families'/carers' safety and wellbeing and ensure their rights are upheld.
5.12	Utilises secondary consultation, mentoring, professional supervision and management support to seek advice, problem solve difficulties, showcase progress and complement knowledge and expertise.	5.13	Shares clinical knowledge in a way that supports consumers and their families/carers in the process and responds to consumers' varying levels of vulnerability and resilience at different times.
5.14	Seeks feedback from consumers, carers and service providers to inform ongoing practice	5.15	Assists consumers to access support to fulfil their social, educational, vocational and caring roles.

Work domain 6

Supporting an understanding of and participation in a change in circumstance review process

Agreed outcomes

Ways of working in this domain support the following outcomes:

- Consumer is able to request a review where process is simple, straightforward and time critical and results in a new plan.
- Consumer knows what is available in existing plan budget that may be used flexibly in interim.
- The consumer and their family/carer receive support and are able to be heard in the review process.

Ways of working

6.1	<i>Working in partnership</i>	Supporting consumers in identifying changed circumstances and the supports they require to inform plan redesign.
6.2	<i>Communicating, coordinating, facilitating</i>	Notifying the consumer's Support Coordinator or LAC when there is a change in need or circumstance. Liaison with LAC/Support Coordinator/service providers around scope to use existing plan budget flexibly in interim.
6.3	<i>Working in partnership</i>	Supporting consumers in identifying changed circumstances and the supports they require to inform plan redesign.
6.4	<i>Providing evidence</i>	Providing and/or assisting consumers to gather evidence regarding what has changed in their life that affects their current plan. Reviewing and updating mental health care plans in response to changed circumstances.
6.5	<i>Supporting and representing</i>	Where a new plan is not endorsed by NDIA, requesting clarification from the NDIA and supports appeals if required.

Supportive practices

6.6	Engaging in ongoing dialogue and enquiry about consumers' needs, wishes and experiences.	6.7	Detecting emerging problems and takes proactive steps to ensure that issues are managed and risks minimised.
6.8	Working sensitively, responsively, respectfully and collaboratively with consumers and their support networks.	6.9	Establishing and maintaining knowledge of the processes and best practice advice that enables rapid change in circumstance reviews.
6.10	Identifying how a change in circumstances requiring a new plan may impact on consumer's ability to exercise choice and control and participate fully in the review and planning process, and develops strategies to reduce impact.	6.11	Developing linkages and fosters working relationships to create a seamless and coordinated response to a significant change.