The Carers Victoria “Planning for the Future” series is for carers of people with a disability who have decision making difficulties to help them think about what is important when planning for the future.

The aim of the series is to give carers practical tips, tools and resources to help detail the areas of life that are important to people with a disability.

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) knows that families and carers are partners in the support of people with disability. You provide help and support that cannot be provided by formal services or paid support workers. One of the core aims of the NDIS is to better support you in your caring role.

Your views and experiences will be important in the planning process for the NDIS because you have a unique understanding of the person you care for.

As a carer, by helping with decision making about ongoing support needs, goal setting, assessment and planning, you play a vital role in the entry into the NDIS of the person you care for.

Carers Victoria is a not for profit organisation working to improve the health, wellbeing, resilience and economic security of family carers. The organisation is funded by a mix of government and philanthropic grants and through the generosity of private donors.

Carers Victoria strives for improved services, systems and supports for caring families by raising awareness of carers’ needs and liaising with governments, community and corporate partners and the broader public.

We are a member of the National Network of Carer Associations and are incorporated under the Association Incorporation Act 2012 (Vic).

Carers Victoria recognises that all individuals and caring situations are unique. We work towards identifying and breaking down barriers to inclusion to ensure that all people with caring responsibilities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people/descent and people of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, sexualities, gender identities and abilities are genuinely valued and supported.

We believe every individual should be respected and their experiences, emotions and beliefs valued.

Carers Victoria promotes diversity in all our organisation’s activities and believes a wide spectrum of individual and shared experience enriches both our work environment and the services we offer to the community.

Workbooks in this series:

- Introduction to the NDIS
- Home and Daily Living
- Choice and Control
- Social and Community Participation
- Work
- Lifelong Learning
- Health and Wellbeing
- Relationships
Planning for the Future

Once you have been told that the person you care for is able to participate in the NDIS, you can start the planning and assessment process. This will help to determine the informal, community and mainstream services and any reasonable and necessary supports the person with disability may need to achieve their goals.

The planning and assessment process is focused on the person with a disability. It is the start of a lifelong relationship between them and the NDIS. It uses goal-based planning to consider their strengths. It also aims to maximise their choices and independence.

This workbook will help you plan for the NDIS outcome domain of ‘Choice and Control’ by stepping you through the easy **5 Step Process** shown below.

The 5 Step Process

Follow the below **5 Step Process** when planning for each outcome the person you are caring for wants to achieve. Break each goal up into the individual NDIS Outcome Domains. See below.

1. Understand what the NDIS is currently saying
2. Look at existing arrangements
3. Ask questions and explore different options, what if things change?
4. Plan for change
5. Break down the steps to make it easier to navigate (including the resources to help you)

A dream written down becomes a goal

A goal broken down into steps becomes a plan

A plan backed with actions helps dreams to come true
Step 1. Understand what the NDIS is currently saying

What is Choice and Control?

Choice and control is about people with disability, their families and carers having control over the course of their lives, including the flexibility to make decisions about the disability services and supports they use.

Under the NDIS this means decisions around things like:

- The type of supports and services they use
- Who provides them
- How they are designed and provided
- How resources are able to be used
- How their funding is managed.

There is good evidence to suggest that when people with disability are given greater choice and control over their services they achieve better life outcomes.

Greater choice and control can also lead to more efficient and effective delivery from disability service providers.

1. **Choice:** the NDIS should maximise opportunities for people with disability to plan and design their support arrangements.

2. **Control:** each person should be able to choose how much control they want over their funding, supports and service providers, and be able to change this control over time.

3. **Presumption of capacity:** the NDIS should presume that people with disability, with the right support, have the capacity to exercise choice and control.

4. **Design:** each part of the system should be designed to ensure people with disability have maximum choice and control.

5. **Minimum intervention:** the design of the NDIS should seek to intervene in people’s lives in the least intrusive way.

6. **Minimum restrictions:** any restrictions on choice and control should be minimal and evidence based. Clear information should be provided to people with disability, their families and carers so that these are transparent and easily understood.

7. **Inclusion and flexibility:** decisions about supports and how they are managed should be as inclusive and flexible as a person requires. Decisions should be directed by the person with disability and include anyone else they wish. Decisions should be revised as a person’s needs change.

8. **Dignity in risk:** people with disability should be allowed to determine their own best interests, make mistakes and learn from those mistakes, so long as the person, or others around them, or their support arrangements are not put at significant risk and public resources are not wasted.
How Should People Be Supported To Exercise Choice And Control?

The NDIS should support and build the capacity of people with disability, their families and carers to make effective decisions.

We believe this might include:

- Information about service and support options, potential providers, and information and advice from Local Area Coordinators.
- Building capacity to exercise control and choice, including working with a person to think broadly about their support needs and building capacity to self-manage their funding, if that is one of their goals.
- Enabling and recognising the role of the trusted advisor nominated by the person with disability to help them exercise their rights.
- Options to support people who take up self-managed funding and do not wish to manage their funds alone. This includes assistance for a person to monitor and be accountable for their use of funding, along with support to help a person arrange and manage their plan.
- Local Area Coordination to support people by developing community based networks.

How will Choice and Control be protected?

The challenge facing the NDIS is maximising choice and control while ensuring individuals receive safe and effective services that provide good outcomes for people with disability.

This issue is being considered as part of a separate body of work on safeguards.

What should Choice and Control mean for the Disability Sector?

The introduction of individualised and self-directed funding will require a major shift for many service providers. This reform builds on longstanding reforms for the sector. Some assistance may be required to help service providers transition to the new system.

What about Rural and Remote areas?

To exercise choice and control people need access to a supply of support and service options, which may not be the case in rural and remote areas. The NDIS will need to consider options to increase choice by encouraging services and developing the sector.
Step 2. Look at existing arrangements

Write down some of the decisions that the person with a disability makes

Examples include:

- Managing Finances
- Where they live
- Who their friends are
- What activities they participate in
- Selecting Support Workers
- What work they do
- Who they shop with
- Who they live with

Are you, as their carer, happy with the current level of choice and control?

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<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
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Is the person with a disability happy with their level of choice and control?

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<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
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What are the things, as the carer, you like most /like least about the persons’ decision making abilities?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
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Does the person currently face any barriers to maintaining choices?

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<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
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Write down the barriers faced by the person with a disability

Types of barriers include:

- Communication difficulties
- Not being allowed to make choices
- Not being asked
- Lack of choices
- Behaviors of concern
- Not being listened to
What things contribute to increasing their choice and control?

Examples for people with a disabilities:

- Letting the person make their own decisions
- Offering more than one option
- Providing training or information
- Providing accessible information

What supports do they need to achieve this?

Examples for people with a disability

- Assistive technology
- Social groups
- Counselling
- Education and Training
- Transport
- Friends
- Accessible facilities
- Work Experience
Step 3. Ask questions and explore different options, what if things change?

When we ask questions, it helps us to get a better understanding of what we want and need and also helps us to prioritise what we want.

Is the person able to make their own decisions?

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<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
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What could be changed to help them make their own choices?

Are there any skills that could help the person to improve their choice and control?

Can the person with disability make decisions?

<table>
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<th>Yes without support</th>
<th>Yes with minimal Support</th>
<th>Yes with additional supports</th>
<th>Yes with significant support</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
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Does the person have a good support network?

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<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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If you could no longer support the person, is there a plan in place to support them with the things that you do?

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<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
<th>A bit</th>
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Do other people know what the plan is?

| Yes, it’s written down | Yes, we have talked about it | Maybe | No, nothing is planned |
Who can help us to find out about choice and control options available in our local community?

- Advocacy organisations
- Family or friends
- Facebook
- Rural or Metro access workers
- Newspapers
- Expos or events
- NDIS Local area coordinators
- Working groups
- Centrelinks
- Community Health Services, Hospitals, Allied Heath Services
- Neighborhood houses, community centres
- Disability services providers
- Community Groups or Organisations
- Local Councils or Shires
- Local Doctors or Nursing services

Is there anyone else not listed above?

Document who you can contact in your local community

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Contact</th>
<th>Contact Number</th>
<th>Contact Email</th>
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Step 4. Plan for change

Tips for planning for change

1. **Get ready early**: It is very important to start your transition planning as early as possible.

2. **Get the big picture**: Think about the person’s goals and interests and talk to them and their support people about the future.

3. **Get connected**: Make connections with people who can help with the transition such as other carers, disability support organisations and the local community.

4. **Get to know your options**: Research different areas and identify realistic options.

5. **Get the skills**: Identify the skills of the person with a disability that they currently possess and how they can develop others?

6. **Get organised**: It’s really important to be organised and manage time effectively.

7. **Get support**: Think about where the person can get support from and the types of additional support they may need.

8. **Get involved**: There are lots of ways to gain experience that will be really valuable in the future, look at mainstream supports as well as disability specific supports.

9. **Get confident**: Know their goals and help the person with a disability to achieve them.


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<tr>
<th>Dream</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Plan</th>
<th>Action</th>
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- Decide. Think of something the person with a disability wants to do or work towards.
- Write it down.
- Tell the planner – telling someone we know about our goals also seems to increase the likelihood that we will stick at them.
- Break the goal down.
- Plan your first step.
- Keep going.
- Don’t forget to celebrate when you achieve your goal.
Step 5. Break down the steps to make it easier to navigate

What is the dream?

What are the goals?
What is the plan?

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<th>Details of plan</th>
<th>Who is responsible?</th>
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What are the actions?

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<th>What needs to be done?</th>
<th>By Who?</th>
<th>When?</th>
<th>How?</th>
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Considering supported decision making options – you need to explore

1. Think of a time when YOU made a big decision.
   • What kinds of advice and help did you get with your decision?
   • How is this similar and different to the support needed by your family member when making decisions?

2. Think about your assumptions and beliefs about the capacity to make decisions the person you care for has. To what extent do you believe the person is able to make decisions about their life?

3. How important are the following ideas and values?

   Adults having an equal right to make decisions that affect their lives and to have those decisions respected.

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   People being provided with access to the support necessary for them to make, communicate and participate in decisions that affect their lives.

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   Decisions being lead by the person’s will, preferences and rights.

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   Making sure safeguards are in place to prevent abuse and undue influence.

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Options for Funding Plan Management

Currently in the pilot phase under NDIS, participants are able to choose their provider and manage arrangements such as the timing and frequency of service delivery with their provider. Participants choose how to manage their funding consistent with their plan. Funding can be managed by:

1. The individual
2. A plan ‘nominee’
3. A registered plan management provider, or

The type of management of the funding for supports that a participant chooses will vary depending on their circumstances. Different options can be chosen for different supports. Plans may have a combination of the options as shown.
Financial Intermediary/Registered Plan Management Provider

This is a term used to describe an individual or organisation that undertakes the management of funds of the supports in a participant's plan.

Some NDIS participants will have some of their plan’s funds managed by the NDIS. These participants will only be able to access supports from registered providers with NDIA.

A registered service provider can interact with NDIS online through their provider portal.

Through the provider portal, a registered service provider will be able to view the participant plan support elements that they deliver, and how they are tracking against existing funding agreements.

Self-managed or Direct Payments

Is one of the funding administration options available. When self-managing, funding is transferred to a nominated bank account that is managed by the family. The family then purchases and pays for the supports that meet the goals in the plan.

When you self-manage you can choose to use registered providers as well as providers who are not registered with NDIA.

Having the confidence to self-manage the plan of the person you care for is a great skill and it helps you to have some control of what is happening to you and your family. Sometimes it's not easy. It’s okay to feel doubtful or overwhelmed at times, because no doubt you will.


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1. What types of things help the person to express choice?

2. What types of things are a hindrance to the person making choices?

3. How do I make sure I stay neutral, so that decisions are lead by the person and their viewpoint.

4. How can supporters (including unpaid and paid supporters) work more closely and collaboratively in supporting the person to make decisions?

5. List three ideas you can put in place to better support the person’s decision making.

6. Think about the person’s communication, the way information is gathered and presented to the person, making sure that necessary others are consulted, ways to think about and weigh up different options, taking risks, and working through tensions and dilemmas.

*Source: [Sean’s Decision | Decision-making support for people with cognitive disability: Guidelines for families and carers](http://www.ndis.gov.au/providers-1)*
Why Decision Making is Useful

People make hundreds of decisions every day, most of which are straightforward and happen without us thinking too much about them. However, when situations are more complicated and have longer term impacts, decisions may become more difficult to make.

It’s common for people when faced with tough decisions to feel:

- Overwhelmed
- Stressed or anxious
- Wound up
- Pressured
- Confused
- Distracted
- Tired

Because indecision can have a really negative impact on how you are feeling, it’s important to learn strategies for making positive decisions in tough situations.

Tips for Making Decisions

- **Don’t let stress get the better of you.** Being faced with a tough choice can make people stressed out and anxious. No one wants to feel stressed, so people tend to either rush decisions without thinking them through, or they completely avoid making a decision at all because their stress has put them off their game. If you’re feeling stressed or anxious about a decision, it’s important to try and manage your stress so that it doesn’t get in the way of you making the right choice.

- **Give yourself some time (if possible).** Giving yourself the chance to sit on a problem for a little while can help you to be sure you are happy with a course of action. So if you have time to decide, take it.

- **Weigh up the pros/cons.** If there are a lot of factors to consider about a situation, it’s likely that there are going to be some negative impacts, no matter what decision you end up making. Write a list of pros and cons for each course of action and then compare them.

- **Think about your goals and values.** Goals and values can help make a decision. When you factor the things that are important to you into a decision, you’re more likely to end up with an outcome you are happy with.

- **Consider all the possibilities.** When you’re making a decision there can be several different outcomes and not all of them are obvious. When you’re looking at each option, don’t just list the positives and negatives; try and write down any likely or possible consequences that could impact on your choice.

- **Talk it out.** It can be really helpful to get other people’s perspectives on different options, particularly when they’ve made similar decisions in the past.

- **Keep a diary.** If you’re on a bit of an emotional roller-coaster, it might help to keep track of all your feelings by writing them down.

- **Plan how you will tell others.** If you think someone may have a bad response to your decision, try and think through what their reaction is likely to be. This will help you think about good ways of managing the situation.

- **Rethink your options.** If you’re up against a lot of pressures over a decision, or different challenges have arisen, it never hurts to have a look over your options again. You may decide that your original decision is still the best for you, but decisions don’t have to be final. If you think a decision is no longer right for you, go through the steps again to figure out what is.
If you’re really having trouble with a tough choice

If you’re feeling overwhelmed with negative feelings because you are facing a tough decision, it’s important that you look after yourself. Take some time out to relax or do something you enjoy.

If you’re finding indecision over a situation is impacting how you get on day to day, it’s a good idea to talk to someone you trust, or make a visit to a counsellor. They’ll be able to help you work through the process of decision making, and guide you through different strategies.

Office of the Public Advocate

NDIA decision-making guide for adults with cognitive impairments or mental ill health

This is a guide to assist the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to determine when decision-making support, advocacy, and substitute decision making is needed for current and potential adult NDIS participants who have significant cognitive impairments or mental ill health.

April 2015: Developed by the Office of the Public Advocate (Vic) in consultation with the NDIA Victoria Launch Site

Key principles

1. Decision-making capacity should be assumed and this assumption should only be displaced on the basis of evidence.

2. Capacity is decision-specific. A person can be said to have capacity to make a decision where they can:
   - Understand relevant information,
   - Retain or remember relevant information,
   - Use or weigh up relevant information, and
   - Communicate the decision in words, gestures or other means.

   See, for example, Powers of Attorney Act 2014 (Vic) section 4; Mental Health Act 2014 (Vic) section 68.

3. People should wherever possible be provided with the support to make and implement their own decisions (see United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 12(3); National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (Cth) sections 4 and 5).

4. Substitute decision making should only be used as a last resort, where no less restrictive alternative exists (see United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 12 (4), Guardianship and Administration Act 1986 (Vic) section 22(2), Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic) section 7 (2)).
Service Agreements

Making agreements with my chosen providers.

You will normally need to make a written agreement with your provider(s). This is called a Service Agreement. Service Agreements should be simple and set out how and when your supports will be delivered.

Service Agreements can be made between you and your provider, or between another person (like a family member or friend) and your provider. If you have a Support Coordinator you should ask them to help you negotiate your Service Agreements.

When making a Service Agreement, you should take a copy of your NDIS plan. If you like, you can attach the copy of your NDIS plan to your Service Agreement(s).

This will help your provider deliver the right supports in a way that helps you work toward your goals. You will find an example Service Agreement in your plan handover pack. You can make copies of this agreement and use this version if you like. If you would like more information about making service agreements or you want extra copies of an example service agreement go to the NDIS website and view the factsheet Making a Service Agreement with Your Chosen Provider.

I’ve made an agreement with my provider, what next?

If the NDIA is managing your plan you will need to give your chosen provider your NDIS number and date of birth. This will allow them to see supports in your plan that they are registered for on a provider portal. They will not be able to see your full Plan through the provider portal unless you provide consent for them to do so. Sharing your NDIS Plan in full on the Provider Portal will enable all of your registered providers to have a better understanding of what you want to achieve and enable them to support you to achieve your goals and objectives. If you decide that you do want to give your consent to the NDIA to share your NDIS Plan and/or your contact details on the Provider Portal, please ask your local office for a consent form.

Source: ndis.vic.gov.au

What is a Service Agreement?

- A Service Agreement is an agreement between the person with a disability and the people/organisations who will be providing services under the NDIS (National Disability Insurance Scheme).
- A Service Agreement is about the working relationship you have with your Service Provider.
- A Service Agreement can be made between the individual and their Service Provider, or between another person (like a family member or friend) and the Service Provider.
- People will normally need to make a written agreement with their provider(s).
- People can have more than one Service Provider and more than one Service Agreement.
What is a Service Provider?

- A Service Provider is an organisation or business that provides you with Disability Supports under a NDIS Plan.
- People will receive most of their NDIS supports from Service Providers.
- People will have choice and control of the Service Providers they use.

Why do you need to have a Service Agreement?

- Service Agreements allow people to know in writing what is going to happen with the supports they are being provided with.
- Service Agreements help people when they want to change or end their service.
- Service Agreements help people know what costs are involved and who will pay.
- Service Agreements help people understand what is expected of them and also what is expected of the service provider.

What Should a Service Agreement include?

- What supports you will receive
- When, where and how you will receive those supports
- How much the supports will cost and how they will be paid for
- How long you need the supports for
- What is expected of you and your responsibilities
- What is expected of your service provider
- How you can end or change the Agreement

Can you make changes to a Service Agreement?

Yes, provided that:

- The changes are in writing.
- The participant and the service provider agree on the changes.
- You may need to sign a new document saying that you agree with the changes.

Where can I find out more information?

National Disability Insurance Scheme

P: 1800 800 110

W: www.ndis.gov.au