



Participant Understanding and Choice in NDIS Support Coordination

This document aims to demonstrate that a participant in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is supported to understand the distinction between specialised **support coordination** and other **reasonable and necessary supports** funded under their plan. This includes situations where a provider has an interest in a support option, ensuring the participant is fully aware of this interest and that their choices about other providers won't affect their support coordination. This approach aligns with both the NDIS principles and the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct.

Understanding Specialised Support Coordination

Specialised support coordination is a type of support provided to participants with more complex needs. Its primary function is to help participants implement their NDIS plan, connect with a range of providers, and build capacity to make their own decisions. The support coordinator acts as an independent guide, helping the participant navigate the NDIS system and understand their options. The key is that the support coordinator's role is to facilitate choice and control, not to dictate it.

Key distinctions:

- **Role:** The support coordinator's role is a **facilitative** one, focused on planning, connecting, and capacity building.
- **Funding:** This is a separate line item in the NDIS plan, distinct from funding for other supports like therapy, assistive technology, or daily living assistance.
- **Independence:** The support coordinator should operate with impartiality, helping the participant access a range of providers without bias.

Distinguishing Other Reasonable and Necessary Supports

These are the supports that directly address the participant's disability-related needs and help them achieve their goals. They are funded under different line items in the NDIS plan and are distinct from the support coordination budget.

Examples of other supports:

- **Therapies:** Speech pathology, occupational therapy, physiotherapy.
- **Assistive technology:** Wheelchairs, communication devices, modified vehicles.
- **Personal care:** Assistance with daily tasks like showering, dressing, and meal preparation.

The participant is supported to understand that these supports are separate from support coordination, and they have the right to choose any registered provider for these services. This choice won't impact the quality or continuity of their support coordination.

Provider Interest and Informed Choice

A provider of support coordination may also offer other supports. In such cases, the participant is made aware of this potential conflict of interest. The support coordinator must disclose any interest they or their organisation have in a support option and ensure the participant understands they are under **no obligation** to choose that particular provider.

This process involves:

1. **Disclosure:** The support coordinator explicitly informs the participant about any financial or professional interest in another service.
2. **Information:** The participant is provided with a list of other potential providers for that service, allowing them to compare options.
3. **Confirmation:** The participant's understanding and independent choice are documented, confirming they were not coerced or influenced.

This ensures the participant's choice is **free and informed**, which is a core tenet of the NDIS and a fundamental ethical principle.

Aligned with Ethical and Professional Standards

The principles outlined in this document are directly aligned with the following:

- **NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission:** The NDIS Code of Conduct mandates that providers act with integrity and honesty, upholding the rights of people with disabilities to exercise choice and control.
- **AASW Code of Ethics:** The Code emphasizes core values such as social justice, respect, and professional integrity. It requires social workers to prioritize the self-determination of their clients, manage conflicts of interest, and promote client participation in decision-making.

By adhering to these standards, the support coordinator guarantees the participant is the central decision-maker, fully understanding all their options and making choices free from undue influence. This approach ensures the participant's journey is empowering and respects their autonomy.

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