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Support coordinators play an important part in helping participants to become more independent. A key role of support coordinators is building a participant's capacity and capability to:

- understand their NDIS plan
- navigate the NDIS
- make their own decisions.

They should also help participants prepare for unexpected situations.

Build capacity and resilience

Support coordinators should work with participants, their families and carers to build their confidence and skills to implement their plan more independently. To do this, a support coordinator should:

- explore how the participant can exercise choice and control
- help the participant to clarify their support preferences
- help the participant to identify suitable providers who can meet their needs
- identify and create opportunities for the participant to do these activities more independently.

These tasks should be led by the participant and their families and carers.

A support coordinator should not make decisions on a participant's behalf. Instead they should support participants to make their own decisions, allowing participants to take reasonable risks.

Example: Brian's Story

Brian lives in a regional town in Queensland. He has an NDIS plan and a support coordinator.

He has been receiving therapy supports to help with living at home more independently and to become more comfortable getting around the community.

Brian's current therapist is often booked out weeks in advance and he wants to access and use his therapy supports on a more regular basis.

With help from his family and friends, Brian found a local therapist who could start delivering services right away.

Brian rang his support coordinator to ask for help to change therapists, including ending his service booking with the current provider and setting up a new service agreement and booking with the new provider.

Brian's support coordinator did not think changing therapy providers was in Brian's best interest.

The support coordinator suggested setting up a face-to-face meeting with the current provider to discuss why he wanted to leave, and another meeting with the support coordinator to discuss Brian's choice "to make sure he understood the consequences of his decision."

Brian didn't feel comfortable with this suggestion and didn't feel like he was being heard or respected.

He thought that he was doing the wrong thing and decided not to change provider.

Brian is still currently accessing therapy supports on an irregular basis.

Example: Caterina's Story

Caterina currently has funding in her Capacity Building – Daily Activities budget in her NDIS plan.

She uses this funding to access occupational therapy (OT) to live at home more independently.

Caterina doesn't feel like she is making much progress because she only receives support once every two months.

She talks to her support coordinator about changing therapy providers.

The support coordinator listens to Caterina's concerns and asks whether Caterina would like to stay with the provider if the OT provider could deliver the support more regularly.

Caterina says she likes her current provider and would like to stay if she can.

The support coordinator explains to Caterina that she can talk to her OT about providing more regular supports.

Caterina's support coordinator also explains that they can work with Caterina to find and trial other OT providers if the OT provider doesn't have the capacity or availability to provide more regular supports.

The support coordinator asks Caterina what she would like to do.

Caterina says she would like to talk to her OT provider first and the support coordinator helps her to set up a meeting with the OT.

While the OT provider says they are booked out for the next month, Caterina's therapist says they can scheduled regular monthly or fortnightly sessions after the next month.

After one month passes, Caterina begins receiving OT support on a fortnightly basis and is happy with the progress she is making.

Preparing for unexpected situations

Support coordinators should help participants, their families and carers prepare for unexpected events or challenging situations.

To do this, a support coordinator should:

- understand the participant's circumstances and environment, including any potential and emerging risks
- identify what events or changes in circumstances could occur, this could include:
 - changes in family circumstances and their ability to provide support
 - moving house
 - hospitalisation
 - change in living circumstances
 - service provider changes
- identify any other barriers which could affect the participant's access to, or ability to use, their supports
- plan for unexpected events or situations that might arise
- put the plan into action should the event or situation occur.

When doing this, a support coordinator should make sure they are including participants so they can do these tasks more independently in the future.

Crisis: planning, prevention, mitigation and action

A support coordinator should work with participants, their families and carers to:

- list key contacts and/or supports
- establish supports to prevent crisis situations from arising
- ensure a crisis plan is in place

- help the participant to put the crisis plan into action should a crisis occur
- where appropriate, link the participant to other government services such as justice, education, child and family protection.

Support coordinators should assist participants to access crisis services if needed.

Support coordinators may also need to help participants submit a request for a [plan reassessment](#).

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