



## Mental Health Access Snapshot Series

### Snapshot 5 – NDIS and other services supporting your mental health

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is designed to support people with disability to be part of their communities and the workforce. The NDIS also supports those people with disability that do not meet the NDIS access criteria to receive supports outside of NDIS. The NDIS is able to link people with disability to services within the community that are available to support them.

It is estimated that there are 600,000 Australians living with severe and persistent mental illness of which 290,000 require support periodically. It is anticipated that 64,000 people with severe and persistent mental illness will be eligible to access the NDIS.

The NDIS is not designed to replace community mental health services or treatment services provided through the health system. The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) is committed to working with mainstream systems to deliver a range of high quality services required by people who experience mental health issues.

#### What are mainstream services?

Mainstream services, which include community mental health services, are government systems providing supports to the Australian people. For example health, mental health, education, justice, housing, child protection, and employment. Most people interact with a range of services throughout their life. Mainstream services are also referred to as other government services.

#### What do you mean by the mainstream interface?

The mainstream interface is the point where two systems meet and interact. Each system has different responsibilities. In the context of the NDIA and mental health – it is how the NDIA, mental health services and health services support a person together.

#### Why can't the NDIS be responsible for providing all supports?

The NDIS is responsible for 'ongoing functional' support for day-to-day living. A goal of the NDIS is the full inclusion of people with disability in community. Inclusion and access to supports is therefore a shared responsibility and other mainstream government systems will continue to play a critical role in supporting people with disability. The NDIS alone cannot meet all of a person's needs, we need a truly inclusive community.



## **How does the NDIS work with other government services?**

The NDIA actively creates relationships with mainstream services and the local community. This ongoing engagement creates shared understanding about how the NDIA and other government and community services can work together to address service barriers and gaps in service provision.

The NDIA is committed to working with governments to achieve both a quality and robust NDIS alongside a quality and robust mental health system, to provide people who experience mental health issues with the support they require.

## **What if I am not eligible for NDIS supports?**

The NDIA assists people who are not eligible for individualised NDIS support to obtain information about relevant services in their community.

General support is available from a Local Area Coordinator (LAC) to assist people to access a range of supports within the mainstream and community sector.

LAC support enables the NDIS to offer peace of mind and access to practical support for every Australian – for anyone who has, or might acquire, a disability, including disability as a result of a mental health issues.

## **What is an LAC and how does the NDIS support community inclusion?**

An LAC Partner is a local organisation working with the NDIA. Their staff help people to access the NDIS and/or connect to mainstream services and local and community-based supports. Please contact the NDIS to be linked to an LAC in your area.

The NDIS funds information, linkages and capacity building activities to support a more inclusive community for all people who experience disability.

## **What does continuity of supports mean and what happens to my current support if I am not eligible for the NDIS?**

Continuity of support means that people who do not meet the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) access requirements but were accessing a disability/mental health service (where block funding has transferred to NDIS) prior to being assessed by the NDIA will continue to receive support consistent with their current arrangements.

Disability programs and services are all different, and the way that governments ensure continuity of support will need to be tailored to each program or service.

Governments have committed to ensuring people with disability who are currently receiving services are not disadvantaged in the transition to the NDIS. This means that if you are currently receiving a disability/mental health service, but do not become a participant in the NDIS, you can continue to have access to your current support consistent with your current arrangements. It is best to talk to your current service provider about specific arrangements for your program.



## **My family member has been made ineligible for the NDIS and I believe the NDIA has made the wrong decision. Is there someone outside of the NDIA I can talk to so I feel that I am heard?**

The first thing you need to do is contact the NDIA and ask them to explain the reasons for the decision. If you are not satisfied with the outcome following these discussions you need to request an internal review of the decision.

An internal review of the decision is a new decision made by the NDIA, independent of the original decision.

If you are not satisfied with the review decision then you can apply to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) to have the decision reviewed outside of the NDIA. It is important to note that the AAT will not be able to review your decision until the NDIA has completed the internal review.

The AAT is an independent statutory body set up to provide an independent merits review of a wide range of decisions made by Commonwealth government bodies. An independent merits review means that the AAT will stand in the shoes of the original decision maker and consider all evidence provided when making a new decision.

### **Myth Busters**

**I have used my 10 sessions of psychology under my Medicare funded mental health care plan, I can access the NDIS to top up my mental health care plan.**

**False.** The NDIS does not fund therapy to address symptoms, we fund ongoing functional support for day-to-day living. Treatment supports are not most appropriately funded by the NDIS. NDIS does not require that you access a mental health care plan and is not able to top up funding if you have such a plan. If the only support you require is treatment, it is likely you will not be eligible for the NDIS (because you do not require NDIS support with everyday activities).

**My family member has recently begun to experience severe mental health issues. It is best for me to access the NDIS individualised support (an NDIS plan) early to prevent these issues from becoming lifelong.**

**False.** As agreed between Commonwealth, State and Territory governments, early intervention services for people experiencing mental health issues are generally provided by mainstream services outside the NDIS.

**If I am not eligible for individualised NDIS support (an NDIS plan) the NDIS will not assist me any further.**

**False.** If you do not meet the access requirements for the NDIS, we will link you to an LAC who can help connect you to local community and mainstream supports.

### **Contact the NDIS**

Phone: 1800 800 110

Email: [enquiries@ndis.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@ndis.gov.au)

Visit: [NDIS Website](https://www.ndis.gov.au)