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Step 1: Focus on the stage you're in

If you're already working or volunteering

Ask yourself:

- How many days a week do you work or volunteer?
- How many hours do you work each day?
- Where are you working?
- Would you like to keep working there?
- Would you like help to try something different?
- Is it paid or unpaid work?
- Would you like more hours?
- What sort of supports help you at work?
- Do you have a support worker or co-worker helping you some of the time, all the time or not at all?
- Would you like to find new work opportunities?

For example:

- I volunteer at a clothes shop for 3 hours each Monday. I don't get paid at the moment. I want to work more hours and get paid.
- I work in a supported employment service 3 days a week and would like to try working somewhere else one day a week.
- I want to work more days and be promoted.

If you're ready to start looking for work or volunteering

Ask yourself:

- What sort of work or volunteering would you like to do?

- Is there a volunteer job you'd like to try before applying for a paid job?
- Is someone already helping you, such as your family, a friend, an Inclusive Employment Australia provider or an NDIS provider?

For example:

- I would like to volunteer at my local library. I love books so it's okay if I don't get paid at the start. One day I would like to become a librarian.
- I have always loved baking cakes and cookies. One of my goals is to work in a bakery.

If you're not ready to look for work

Planning to work can feel like a big step. Your my NDIS contact or support coordinator can help you think about steps towards working.

You may use part of your funding for work experience or volunteering to help you decide what you enjoy and what skills you have.

- Can you tell us why you haven't thought about getting a job?

For example:

- I haven't thought about getting a job because I'm not sure if I can work without a lot of help.
- I have thought about getting a job, but I don't know if there's anything I would be good at. Working also seems too hard because of my disability.

Step 2: Explore what skills you have and what work you want to do

Do you have any skills, qualifications or work experience?

Ask yourself:

- What is your level of education?
- Have you done any courses?
- Are there any courses you would like to do?
- Did you do any volunteer work in the past?

For example:

- I did 2 weeks of work experience at a panel beating business when I was at school.
- I don't have any qualifications, but I am good at working on cars.

Do you look after your own money?

Ask yourself:

- Do you have any goals to save money?
- Can you manage your own money?
- Do you have a bank account and bank card?

What tasks do you do well and what do you love doing?

Tell us what you're already good at and if you need some help doing these things.

Ask yourself:

- Do you have any jobs you do at home?
- Are you involved in any sports, social activities or programs?

For example:

- I like cooking and always prepare Sunday dinner with mum's help.
- I clean my room and put my laundry in the washing machine.
- I love mowing the lawn and some people in my street pay me because they say I do a great job.

What transport do you use to get around?

Ask yourself:

- Can you drive a car?
- Do you use public transport?
- Do you have the right equipment to help you catch transport safely?

For example:

- I catch the bus into town and to my friend's house. I have a card in my wallet that helps me to decide which bus stop to get off, but I don't need the card anymore.

Step 3: Look at example employment goals

Example: Mohammed has a goal to volunteer

Mohammed's goal: 'I want to do volunteer work with animals.'

Mohammed used some of his NDIS funding to pay for a support worker. Mohammed's support worker helped him do his volunteer work for a local vet.

The vet clinic owner said, ‘Mohammed is very good at keeping the clinic clean, and checking how much stock they have and keeping a record’.

Mohammed now works at the vet one day a week. He gets paid for his work. Mohammed would like to work 2 days a week. He’ll talk to his my NDIS contact about his new goal at his next planning meeting.

Example: Lachlan has a goal to get a new job

Lachlan’s goal: ‘I want to get a new job.’

Lachlan has worked at a café for the past 2 years. He works 3 days a week.

Lachlan wants to:

- learn new skills
- work full-time.

Lachlan talked to his my NDIS contact about:

- how independent he is now
- support he might need to learn new skills.

Lachlan’s my NDIS contact helps him work out what support he needs to take the next step.

Example: Akari would like to try some jobs before she picks one

Akari’s goal: ‘This year, I’d like to explore what type of jobs might best suit me and find work.’

Akari used employment assistance funding in her NDIS plan to gain work experience in a supermarket. She soon discovered she loved working in the bakery section. Her support worker is developing Akari’s skills to work more independently and gain paid employment.

Example: Adrian has a goal to get a part-time job

Adrian’s goal: ‘I want to get a part-time job by the end of the year.’

Adrian wants a job, but he wasn’t sure:

- if he was ready
- what an employer might expect of him.

A supported employment service might be the right place for Adrian to learn about his skills and interests.

Supported employment services are organisations who offer work to people with disability. They can also offer training to help people with disability learn the skills they need to find employment.

Adrian decided to start work at a supported employment service where he could learn:

- what skills he had
- what it's like to have a job.

Adrian might like to try something new in the future.

Example: Rebecca wants to start her own business

Rebecca's goal: 'I want to start my own lawn mowing business.'

Rebecca loves gardening and mowing lawns. Last year, she only mowed the lawn at home.

Then one of the neighbours asked if she could mow their lawn too. They say she does a great job. Now other neighbours in the street want to pay her to mow their lawns as well.

Rebecca needs help to start her own small lawn mowing business. Rebecca and her mum are talking to her my NDIS contact about the support she can get to start the business. They'll also talk to Centrelink to find out about other supports.

Step 4: Create goals that suits you

Tell us about your employment goals

It can be helpful to write down your employment goals. You can also create a goal that'll help you decide if work is something you want to try.

For example:

- I'd like to start my own dog-walking business by the end of the year.
- I'm not sure about working, but during the next 12 months I'd like to find out what it's like to work and what skills I need.

Ask yourself:

- Do you have ideas about how the NDIS could help you get a job?

For example:

- I don’t think I need much help at work, but I’d like some help to get a better routine in my life to be at work on time.
- I’d like help to learn about dog grooming.
- I have no idea. I want to find out what I’m good at.

The let’s talk about work booklet has space for you to write down answers to questions you have to identify your employment goals.

Step 5: Share your goals

Talk to us about your goals

Share your employment goals at your next plan meeting so they can be included in your NDIS plan. Your NDIA planner will talk to you about your goals and make sure they’re represented correctly in your plan.

It’s important to remember your goals aren’t always directly linked to what we’ll fund. Your goals may change over time. You can change your goals at any time. We’ll talk to you about your goals at your next plan reassessment.

Learn more about how to change your goals.

Related information

Guide to employment

Guide to employment support for young participants

What is a support coordinator

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