

This PDF is available as an additional resource to complement the interactive training module.

Significant functionality is lost with the translation to PDF and we recommend all staff to complete the online version.



This module is for people who are assisting NDIS participants prepare for their planning meetings.

The information in this module is general in nature. Every organisation does things differently and has different policies and procedures, so please interpret the content in this module with your organisation in mind and discuss any discrepancies with your line manager.

Duration: Approximately 30-40 minutes (note. you can close the training and pick up where you left off at a later date).

Last updated: February, 2022

Content and links in this training were correct at the time of publication. We check these regularly; however, if you find broken links or errors please contact transitionsupport@flinders.edu.au

Course Outline

- ≡ Training objectives
- ≡ COVID-19 update
- ≡ Overview
- ≡ What to expect from a planning meeting
- ≡ Goals and aspirations
- ≡ Existing supports
- ≡ Changing needs
- ≡ Plan management



Training objectives

This training aims to give health professionals the information they need to support an adult with psychosocial disability to access the NDIS.

By the end of this training you will:

- ☐ Understand who is likely to meet the criteria to access the NDIS
- ☐ Know the steps to apply to access the NDIS
- ☐ Understand what evidence needs to be collected for an access request
- ☐ Be able to differentiate between good and bad evidence



Assumed knowledge

This module assumes a general understanding of the NDIS, its purpose and what types of supports are funded. The below training modules cover these topics in detail:

- NDIS explained
- Recovery and the NDIS
- Reasonable and necessary and the NDIS



Content in this training is based on the following sources:

- The National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 ([external link](#))
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Becoming a Participant) Rules 2016 ([external link](#))
- Access to the NDIS operational guidelines ([external link](#))
- Mental Health and the NDIS webpage ([external link](#))
- NDIS mental health snapshot series ([external link to download](#))
- Consultation with mental health providers and NDIA representatives as part of activities conducted by the Transition Support Project team

COVID-19 update

COVID-19 changes

The NDIA have made a number of short-term changes to the way that people can use their NDIS funding as a result of COVID-19. Some of the content discussed in these training modules may not apply to the current context. A summary of the major COVID-19 related changes is discussed here, including links to further resources. These changes are likely to be reviewed in the coming months.

Key changes

New line items for support coordination

From 25 March 2020, the support items for Support Coordination were temporarily duplicated into the Core Support Category – Assistance with Daily Life – so that participants can have greater access to support coordination services if they need them. Read more on the [COVID-19 updates Support Coordination page](#).

Increased plan flexibility

Core funding is now completely flexible, people with any core funding can use this funding to purchase any services/supports across the four categories. There are also several new capacity building line items to provide further flexibility using capacity building budgets and an easier process to request a transfer of funds from capacity building to core if necessary. This is a continually evolving space, we recommend staying up to date by regularly checking the NDIS ['using your budget'](#) updates.

Phone planning

Planning and review meetings are now held over the phone instead of face to face. Existing plans will be automatically extended by 12 months until a plan review can be scheduled. Read about planning on the ['your plan'](#) page.

Provider flexibility

There are a number of changes to service delivery including broadening the criteria for charging for cancellations, and allowing an increased price loading in some circumstances.

Visit the ['Advice for providers'](#) page for a full summary, you can also refer to the [Quality and Safeguard COVID updates page](#).

All relevant information including updates, FAQs and information packs can be found on the NDIS Coronavirus information and support page.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) information and support

We know that participants, their families and NDIS providers may be looking for workers to deliver disability supports, and provide extra cover at the moment. For participants, there are a number of online matching platforms that can help you quickly and easily connect to support workers.

[READ MORE NDIS](#)

Overview

You will often hear people use the term 'pre-planning' in the NDIS. But what does this really mean? Click on the image below to show where you think pre-planning sits on the NDIS pathway.



Why is pre-planning important?

The NDIA will work with participants to make the planning phase as seamless as possible - but remember, you know the person well and can help to make it even better!



People do turn up to planning meetings under-prepared... My advice to participants (and those supporting them) is to go to the meeting and take control - let the planner know what it is that you need, why you need it, and why it's important.

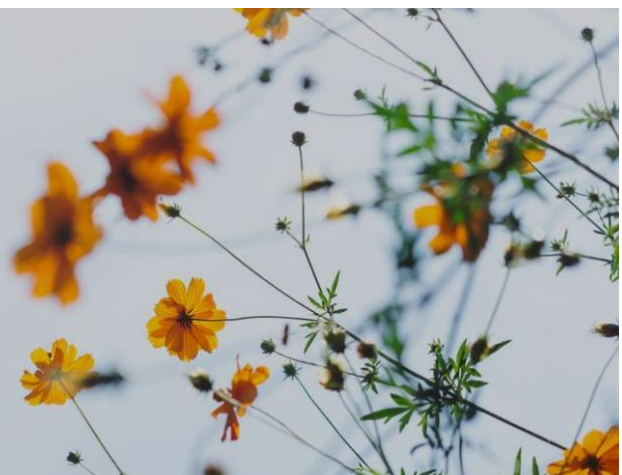
Provider tip

This module will give you the tools to work with people prior to their planning meeting. It will demystify the planning process and cover important topics to address before the first planning meeting. By the end of this module you will know:

- ☐ What happens at a planning meeting
- ☐ How to work with participants to develop goals for NDIS plans
- ☐ What information about existing services and supports is useful for NDIS planners
- ☐ That it is important to think about how a person's changing needs can be supported in NDIS plans
- ☐ How 'trusted others' can be included in a person's plan
- ☐ The options available for managing a plan
- ☐ About your role in the pre-planning phase, and why it is important

What to expect from a planning meeting

Make sure people have an understanding of what the planning meeting will involve and what their rights are. This is a new experience, and having this discussion can help people to feel prepared.





During COVID-19 all planning meetings are happening over the phone. See the [NDIS website](#) for more information.

WHO WILL BE
THERE?

WHAT HAPPENS AT
THE MEETING?

WHEN WILL IT BE
HELD?

WHERE WILL IT BE
HELD?

Who will be there?

A representative of the NDIA (either a planner or an LAC/NDIA community partner) will be at the meeting. Where possible, the NDIA will aim to ensure the NDIA representative has specialist knowledge of psychosocial disability.

Participants can also choose to bring other people with them to the meeting. Trusted others can include their support worker, carer, family or friends. These people can be there as personal support; they can also contribute to the meeting with information of their own if the person chooses. For example, carers and support people can help the person to discuss times when their support needs change (e.g., what happens when they are particularly unwell).

What happens at the meeting?

The purpose of the planning meeting is for the NDIA representative to meet with the participant and identify what kinds of services and supports they need included in their plan. NDIS plans are very individualised; they will be developed based on a person's current circumstances and their goals for the future. In order to develop a plan like this the NDIA representative will need to ask a number of questions to develop a plan that meets individual circumstances and needs, including:

- the person's goals and aspirations
- current service use
- how/if service needs might change during the year
- who supports the person (e.g., informal networks, family, friends, carers, existing mainstream providers like psychologists)
- the person's current disability support needs
- how the person is functioning at the moment
- any risks and vulnerabilities with regards to managing NDIS plans and accessing services

It is very important that people know that these types of questions will be asked and that they can choose not to respond to questions. Remember, this is also an opportunity for the person and their support people to ask questions too.

The pre-planning work that you do (e.g., developing goals and aspirations, developing a timetable of supports, discussing changing needs and communication preferences) can also help to prepare the person for this meeting and make sure they have everything they need to answer questions.

When will it be held?

After access has been granted, the NDIA will contact the participant to schedule the planning meeting. The person can choose a time that suits them.

Where will it be held?

The participant is in charge of where the meeting will be held. It will most often be face-to-face unless the person requests otherwise. The participant can choose to attend their local NDIA or LAC office or ask the NDIA representative to meet them at a location they feel comfortable in.

What information is included in a plan?

Flip the cards below to learn more about the different sections of an NDIS plan. We will address plan implementation (e.g., understanding plans, identifying services) in future training modules. However, for now you may find it useful to have a broad understanding of what's included in plans and how the pre-planning work that you do can help to inform these sections of the plan.

About me

The first section of the plan includes a participant statement. This is written in the first person and describes where they live, the people who support them and their daily life (e.g., what a person usually does with their day, their hobbies and so forth).

My goals

This section describes the person's goals and aspirations that they would like to use their plan to work towards. It can include short-term and long-term goals.

My supports

This section describes the person's support network(s) including: family and friends (informal supports), community supports and mainstream supports.

NDIS reasonable and necessary support budgets

Usually included under the heading 'my supports' this section describes the support areas that are considered reasonable and necessary in order for the person to meet their goals, and the amount of funding allocated to that support area. It will also include a description of how the funding can be used.



Scenario

Beth has been granted access to the NDIS. She is excited about getting her plan but she is also very anxious about it. She doesn't feel comfortable talking about the things that she finds difficult and takes a long time to trust other people - including health professionals. Beth calls to tell you that the NDIA have asked her to come to a planning meeting and it is scheduled for two weeks time. Beth is now really worried about meeting the NDIA person and needing to tell her story; it took her a long time to be able to tell her psychiatrist about her past, she doesn't want to do it again. What might you do to help Beth with her concerns? (check the boxes).

- ☐ Talk to Beth about the types of questions that will be asked at the meeting. Tell her that you can help her to prepare for these.
- ☐ Check that Beth is comfortable with the time and location of the meeting, and remind her that she is able to change this to a time and place that suits her.
- ☐ Tell Beth that the NDIA will want to know what types of supports she needs now and in the future, but they will not need to know about her past; she needn't share personal information that contributed to her current difficulties.
- ☐ Ask Beth if there is anyone that she would like to bring to the meeting with her, and what role she would like that person to play at the meeting (e.g., would she prefer they talk about certain topics on her behalf?)
- ☐ Call the NDIA (with Beth's permission) and tell them about Beth's concerns. Mention that there are a few areas of Beth's life that she finds difficult to talk about and what these are so that they can be treated with caution.

All the above options are a good idea. Remember, this is Beth's meeting, she can choose when it happens, who is there and how it runs. Beth might benefit from sitting down with you and talking through the process; this can help to make sure Beth is prepared to discuss both difficulties and strengths, and ensures that she has had the opportunity to think about the things that are important to her so that these can be shared with the NDIA.

Also, don't be afraid to reach out to the NDIA in advance. If there is something that the participant would like to address before the meeting then you can call the NDIA representative before the meeting to let them know.



Plan development

At the moment, plans are created after the meeting and sent back to the participant. The NDIA will be making some changes to the planning pathway which may include an option for developing the plan during the planning meeting. More information about the new pathway experience will be released as it becomes available. The

process may vary depending on where you work - have a chat with your colleagues or local NDIA staff to learn about how plans are created in your region.

Goals and aspirations

The aim of the NDIS is to help people to live the life they choose. All supports that are included in a person's plan must link back to their goals. Therefore it is really important to put some thought into some goals and aspirations for the future before attending the planning meeting.



Scenario

Tim has been granted access to the NDIS. He has heard great things about the NDIS from friends of his and is excited to get started. You sit down with Tim to do some pre-planning; specifically, you want to chat about the types of things he hopes to do in the future because of his NDIS plan.

Tim says that he really wants to go on a holiday. He has been wanting to go to Vietnam for years; but he has never been able to afford it, plus crowds make him nervous and he doesn't think he will be able to go alone. He is hoping that his NDIS plan will include money for him to be able to travel.

How do you respond to Tim?

That sounds like a great idea! Let's jot that down as a goal and move on to the next one.

Hmmm, you could but this might get Tim's hopes up. This is certainly a good goal for Tim, but do you think he might benefit from some information about how the NDIS support holidays?

That sounds great, but the NDIS don't pay for holidays. Perhaps we should focus on some different goals.

The NDIS won't pay for holidays but that doesn't mean that Tim can't use his NDIS funding to build his capacity for travel. There is no reason why Tim shouldn't have this goal.

That sounds great. Lets have a chat about some of the ways the NDIS might be able to help with that goal.

This is the best approach. There are a number of ways the NDIS can help with travel, but Tim needs to know what they are so he has a clear idea of what to expect when he brings this up in planning.



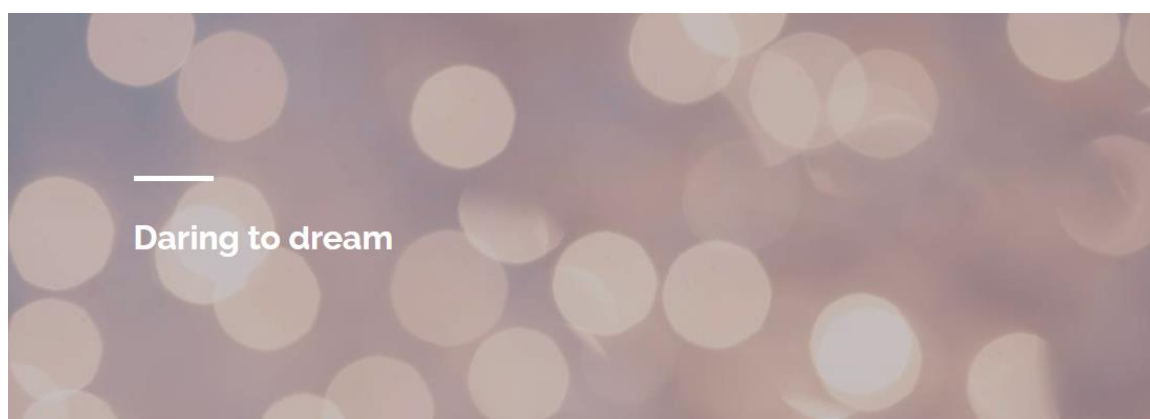
Dream big!

There is no reason not to dream big in the NDIS. The NDIS is all about thinking creatively and supporting people to live the life they choose.

You do, however, need to manage expectations around what the NDIS will and won't pay for. This is a good opportunity to prepare people for planning discussions. Use your knowledge of reasonable and necessary support principles to help people to understand the types of supports that might assist with achieving their hopes and dreams.

For example, in the scenario above, the NDIS won't pay for the cost of Tim's travel, but they might be able to provide some assistance to help him to independently manage his finances, and to address his social anxiety which will build his capacity to travel.

It is very important that you have a clear understanding of the NDIS at this point. If you are not familiar with the reasonable and necessary principles, we have developed a [training module](#) which is available on our website.



Use your existing resources and skills

The NDIS is a new idea to many people who previously had to fit with the services that were offered to them - rather than being in a position to choose services to suit their needs. Some people may therefore struggle to identify goals.

You have probably already done some work in this space with participants in your program and have some great resources and strategies available to you. Tools like the CANSAS, the Recovery Star, and the LSP 16 can all be great ways to identify areas of unmet need and areas of strength.



The [Reimagine My Life Workbook](#), developed for mental health consumers by the Mental Health Coordinating Council is also great pre-planning tool.



Thinking about goals and aspirations

Goals and aspirations are used to determine what support a person needs. It is very important that the person you are working with takes some time to think about these. Some things to keep in mind when working with people in this space include:

- Goals can be big or small, long term or short term. It is up to the person how far they want to work toward achieving their goals.
- Goals can change - there will be opportunities to revise and update these at plan reviews.
- Identify unmet needs: if you have worked with the person for a while or supported them through NDIS access you likely already have an idea of what areas they might benefit from support in. You can use these as a starting point for discussions.
- Identify strengths: the NDIS is not all about addressing unmet need, it can (and should!) also be an opportunity for people to build on areas of their life where they are doing well.
- Consider any existing action plans you have developed with the person. These can also be a starting point for discussion and already have some information in them about support needs, and current services.

Provider tips

Be fully prepared. Complete a functional assessment e.g WHODAS or LSP-16, put it in your application and have it at your planning meeting - you want to be able to turn up and say 'Hi I'm Mark, and this is what I need, and this is why I need it, and this is why it's important to me'.

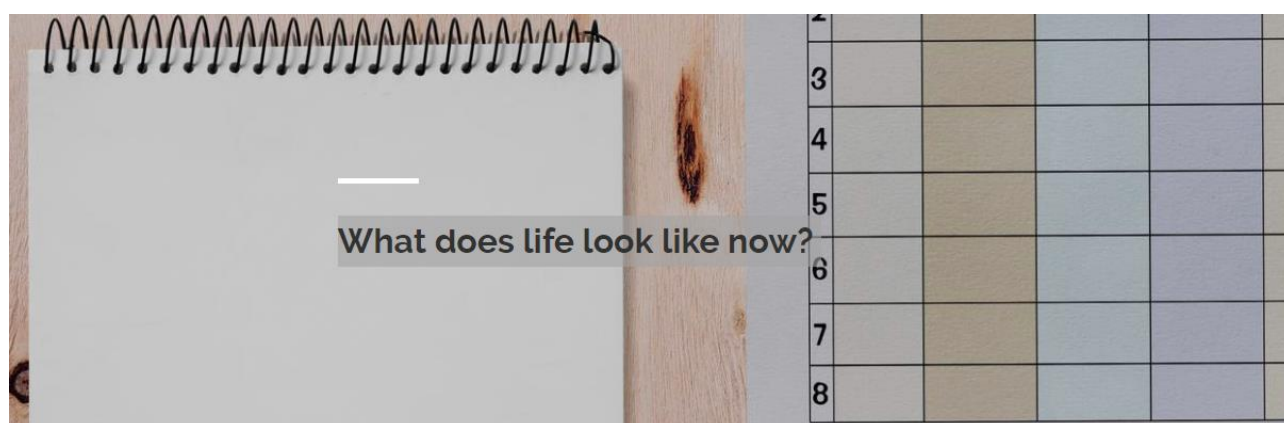
I've been able to get services in place for people that they never had access to before. I had participants who day to day had nothing to do, or no interest in getting out of their house, and I had no way to encourage them to dream bigger. Now they're into photography, going bushwalking... things that I never ever could have offered them previously because the services just weren't available

Participant experiences

The Reimagine website has a great collection of resources developed for mental health consumers to explore goals and aspirations. The below video provides some great examples of what other people have included as their goals. They have also developed an interactive activity called [exploring our hopes and dreams](#) which people can do at their own pace.



Existing supports



It is important that first plans take into consideration the services and supports that a person was accessing before the NDIS. This is also part of understanding the person's day to day life and their support needs. The NDIA representative will ask about these at the planning meeting. However, if you are prepared it can help to avoid forgetting important things or underestimating service use. The best way to gather this information is in a timetable (weekly or monthly depending on how frequently people access services).

This timetable should include:

- ☐ All services a person currently accesses, including services that will continue when the person has an NDIS plan, and any mainstream services that the person uses regularly.
- ☐ Any informal support provided on a regular basis, e.g., carer or friend accompanies person to a football game every fortnight, carer prepares food or cleans on a regular basis.
- ☐ When and how frequently they access these services (weekly, fortnightly, monthly).
- ☐ How much time is spent providing each service. Don't forget to consider time spent providing services outside of face-to-face visits such as travel time or time spent making referrals and so forth. The person you are working with may not always know how much time it really takes to provide a service - call other providers if you are unsure.

Tip

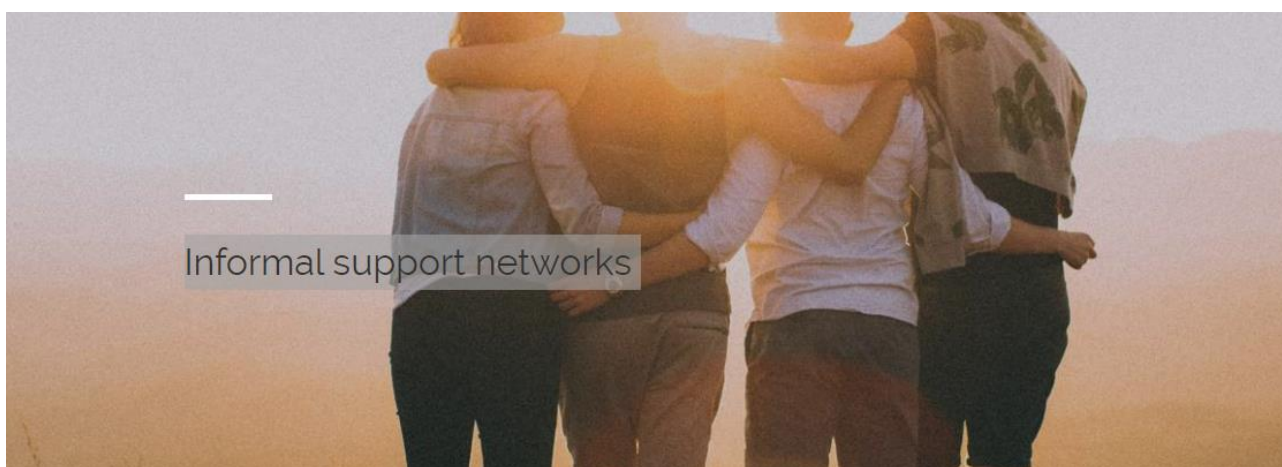
You can prepare a timetable with the person by going through a 'standard' week or fortnight. This can also be a great way to help identify goals and aspirations by exploring how the person might like to make changes to their routine.

What other services are needed?



Now that you have worked with someone to help them to identify goals and aspirations, and have a good picture of their life now, you're in a great position to do a bit of a 'gap analysis' to see what is needed to help people achieve their goals.

The NDIA planner or LAC can also help with this at the planning meeting, but you might find it useful to make a note of any services the person specifically wants or that you are aware of that might be useful - **and why they are needed**. These can then be discussed as options at the planning meeting.



Revision: NDIS services will replace informal support provided by friends, family and carers

- Agree
- Disagree



Consider informal support needs

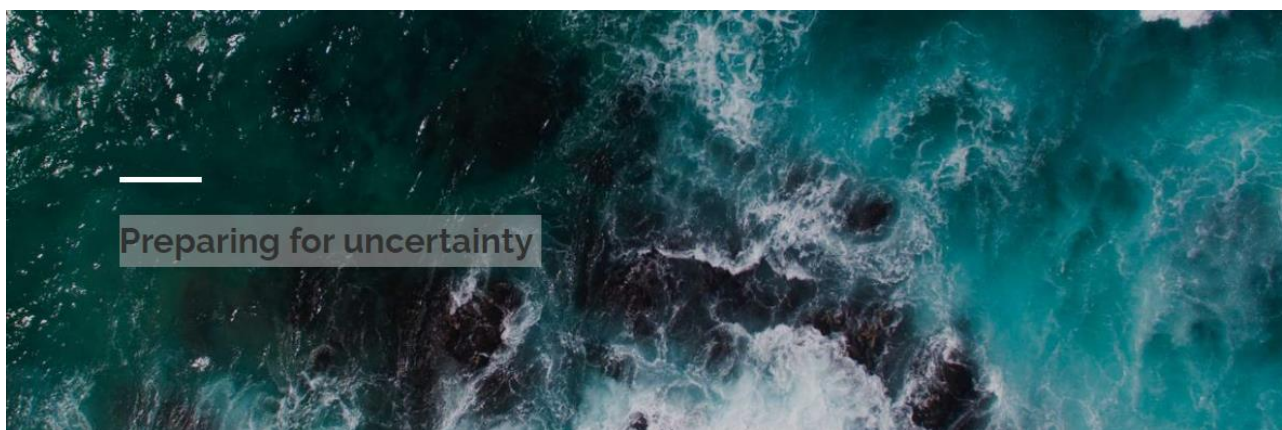
NDIS plans can include services and supports that build the capacity of informal networks. This can include services that enable carer respite such as services to assist the person with their self-care, or skill building for carers.

It is a good idea to work with the person (and/or their carer/trusted support person) during the pre- planning stage to identify who the important people are in their lives and

how the NDIS plan can support carers in their role and strengthen existing relationships.

Not sure about how the NDIS supports carers? See our [Reasonable and Necessary Training Module](#).

Changing needs



A timetable of services and supports will usually show a person's average level of support need. However, it is also important to put some thought into when, or if, a person's needs might change. NDIS plans can be flexible to allow funding and service access to change based on need. This is useful to consider at pre-planning because:

- ☐ You have a relationship and rapport with the person which can help when having conversations about times when the person is unwell - rather than them having the discussion for the first time with someone who they don't know that well.
- ☐ People may find it hard to think about how their needs might change in the future. You may be able to help by having discussions about the types of things that they have done, or wanted to do, in the past when unwell.
- ☐ You can balance this discussion with a discussion about the person's strengths and goals.
- ☐ Often people attend their planning meetings on days when they are doing well. This is completely understandable; however, it could lead people to underestimate their support needs which can be problematic from a planning perspective. If you can show that there are times when support needs increase, this can help to ensure plans include appropriate funding.

Scenario

Gina has been granted access to the NDIS. You have discussed an average week with Gina and have a good picture of her day-to-day life for the planning meeting. Gina lives with her mother and sister; she is usually able to attend appointments and activities with minimal prompting but when really unwell her mother will often cancel her activities and makes sure that she is eating and taking care of herself. Gina has been hospitalised twice in the past year; when she is discharged it can take quite a while for her to get back into a routine again and she often needs quite a lot of support and additional services during this time. What types of things might be useful to include in Gina's plan to make sure she gets the support she needs at all times?

A description of Gina's service use when she is doing well and when she is not doing so well.

Good idea! This can help to ensure that there is appropriate funding to allow for Gina to decrease the level of support when she is doing well and increase if she needs.

A list of people who Gina trusts to be involved in her plan.

Good idea! Gina can tell the NDIA who she would like to have access to her plan and who can make decisions on her behalf if needed.

Gina's preferences regarding service use when her needs change.

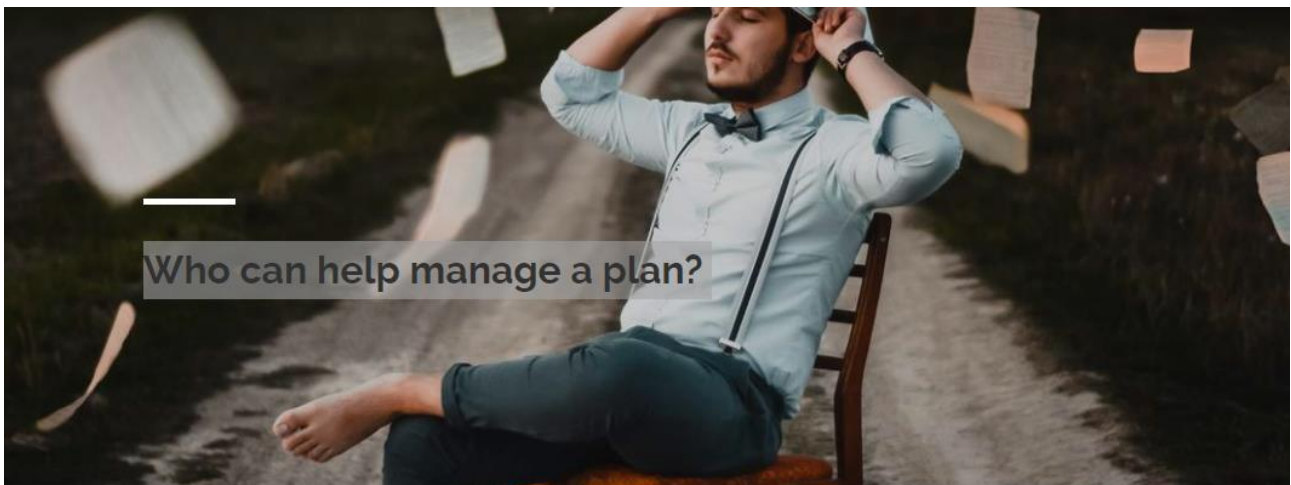
Good idea! The plan could include some strategies regarding what Gina would like to happen if her daily needs change.



Be prepared

As you can see, there are a number of things that can be considered before a planning meeting to make sure Gina has choice and control regarding her changing needs. Preparation will also help ensure Gina's privacy and dignity are respected when developing her NDIS plan. Thinking about this can be challenging – this is why your role is so important.

Plan management



Who can help manage a plan?

There are a few different ways that plan funding can be managed. This means how services are paid for using the NDIS funding. Different options may suit different people so it is a good idea to have an understanding of these in advance.

Plan management at a glance

Agency managed

This is the most common option. It is when the person chooses for the NDIA to manage their plan and pay for services. If the person chooses this option they can only use services from registered providers, who will set up a service agreement and bill the NDIA directly for supports delivered.

Plan managed

This is when the person pays someone (using their NDIS funding) to manage their plan for them. A plan manager will pay providers on behalf of the person - this includes registered and unregistered providers.

Self-managed

This means the NDIS will pay the person directly for the services they use; the person then uses this money to pay the providers directly. Being self-managed allows people to choose any provider, whether they are registered with the NDIS or not.

If someone wants to self-manage, the NDIA representative is likely to ask a few questions during the first planning meeting to assess any risks associated with this option (e.g., can the person manage their own finances?).

Regardless of which option the person chooses, there is always choice and control in terms of which services are accessed and who provides them. Support coordination is a service often included in NDIS plans for people who need a high level of support to implement their plan.

Nominees in the NDIS

NDIS participants can choose to have someone be their official 'plan nominee'. Plan nominees can do all the things that a NDIS participant would do in the scheme, like preparing the plan, managing providers and reviewing the plan on the participant's behalf. This is a formal process and enables the nominee to make decisions for the person. Alternate options for including trusted others in people's plans, whilst also building capacity for self-direction, are to have

a list of people who can view the plan and contact the NDIA and/or negotiate with providers on the person's behalf. This can be arranged at the planning meeting without needing to undergo the formal nominee process. If a person does want a formal plan nominee - the process can also be started at the planning meeting. You can visit the [NDIS website](#) for more information on nominees.



Remember that a key goal of the NDIS is to build independence and capacity to self-direct. This will be considered by planners when including options for plan management.

Congratulations you have finished the 'Preparing
for NDIS planning meetings' training module.