



**WORKABILITY**  
Building Tomorrow's NDIS Workforce

# WORKABILITY QLD

## NDIS Training Requirements and Products



Supported by



# ESSENTIAL SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES FOR NDIS WORKERS

## Introduction

Outpost Consulting was invited by the WorkAbility Qld consortium to investigate the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to support choice and control for NDIS participants and to scope the requirements for training programs to upskill the workforce. Then, to follow this up with a review of existing training products to assess their applicability to the NDIS environment.

This is a report to the project reference group on the first stage of the project. It presents findings of the research to date, a framework for conceptualising NDIS skill requirements and a set of essential skills and attributes considered important for NDIS workers.

## Methodology

This report was developed through desk research as well as interviews with key informants.

We started with a review of the literature on the skills, knowledge and attributes required of disability support workers, particularly those that equip workers to support clients' choice, control and self-determination. The review explored questions such as:

- What attributes do people with a disability want from their support workers?
- What additional skills are needed by workers under user-directed arrangements, as opposed to traditional block funded arrangements?
- What training and professional development approaches work well in building the required skills, knowledge and attributes?

Based the literature review, we developed some propositions which we tested with a selected group of nine 'experts'. We chose our key informants to reflect a mix of expertise with regard to NDIS worker skill needs (see Table 1 below). The project reference group provided guidance on individuals who would have a useful perspective to contribute. Other informants were identified through existing networks and the literature review.

**Table 1: Key informants interviewed**

Name	Role/Organisation	Expertise
<b>Emily Steel</b>	Senior lecturer, Human Services, University of Southern Queensland	Disability education and training provider – developed new NDIS program
<b>Deb Rouget</b>	CEO, Belonging Matters	NDIS service provider (Victoria) – expert on user directed approaches
<b>Margaret Ward</b>	Fellow, Griffith University	Academic – Disability/NDIS – research on enabling user direction
<b>Margaret Rodgers</b>	CEO, Community Resource Unity (CRU)	Person centred responses – information and support for participants and service providers, non-accredited products
<b>Dr Jodie Goldney</b>	Consultant, Qualitate	Learning and development for NDIS providers, developer attributional tool methodology
<b>Isabelle Meyer</b>	Executive Director, Aftercare	Mental Health provider workforce development
<b>Roslyn Loader</b>	Local Area Coordinator, Mackay Indigenous parent of son with disability	Experience as LAC, service provider, Indigenous, parent; runs Indigenous NDIS yarning group with participants
<b>Maureen Fordyce</b>	Manager, AMPARO Advocacy	Inclusion of people with CALD backgrounds in NDIS
<b>Deb Selway</b>	Workability Coordinator, North Queensland	Service provider skill needs

## Findings

The findings below are a summary of the key messages that emerged from a review of literature (see *Attachment A* for a full literature review) and from conversations with key informants.

### The changed role of support workers in a user-directed environment

The NDIS significantly changes the traditional role of support workers. While some providers have operated according to these principles for some time, for other organisations, it represents a new way of thinking and working.

In a user-directed environment, support workers ‘craft’ support to meet a person’s needs and wishes (Chenoweth and Ward, 2015 quoting Illich et al., 1977). Ideally, they come unfettered by expectations or limitations, and work with people with disability to fulfil their personal plans and goals. Over time, support-workers learn how best to do this guided by service-users. They gain trust by getting to know the people well, by following their

direction, and by assisting them to discern what is best for them within the complexity of their personal relationships, capacities, and situations. A support worker's worth is measured more through their achievements, problem solving and trust building with people with disability, their family and allies, than through training and length of service.

### **Personal attributes and a good fit are paramount**

Both the research and interviews affirmed that, in the new NDIS environment, it's most important that support workers have the right attributes and values, and are well-matched to the needs and interests of the participant they support.

Stakeholders talked about the need for support workers to have honesty, integrity and commonsense, and to be trustworthy, reliable and committed.

There's a view that these qualities are even more important than training or a qualification. Chenoweth and Ward (2015) found that training is not a reliable predictor of a worker's suitability for disability support work, and that a respectful attitude, shared values and respect for the service-user are more reliable indicators (p45). This view was echoed in interviews with key informants.

While there are generic attributes valued by most, some attributes are specific to particular clients, cultures or populations. This is why a good match is critical.

*"With NDIS, it's very much about more looking at the fit of the person, rather than the qualifications." (key informant)*

There is some debate about the extent to which the required attributes can be learnt. Certainly, there will be people who aren't suited to disability support work and don't display some of the essential characteristics. But outside of that, research and stakeholder opinion would support the view that people are somewhere on a continuum when it comes to attributes, and they can keep learning and developing these qualities.

*"There's a degree to which some attitudes come with a person, but then some you can learn." (key informant)*

### **Most important skills and knowledge**

In reviewing the literature and interviewing stakeholders, we aimed to get a sense of the core skills and knowledge required of workers, to support people with disability to exercise choice and control in the NDIS environment.

While the importance of attributes was a strong theme, research and stakeholders identified other essential knowledge and skills. These include:

## **Cultural competence**

It's been estimated that, nationally, approximately 21.9% of NDIS participants should come from a CALD background. While the NDIS is still in its early days, the NDIA has acknowledged that, at this stage, all sites have a much lower proportion of CALD participants than expected, constituting only 4% of approved plans as at 30 June 2016 (AMPARO Advocacy, 2016, p5). Indigenous participants are also under-represented in the scheme.

These low levels of participation highlight the need for a culturally competent and responsive NDIS system that will also work to build the capacity of individuals, families and communities from CALD and Indigenous backgrounds to understand their rights, to know what a 'good life' looks like and to be able to fully participate in the NDIS.

A recent evaluation of NDIS trial sites in Queensland found that cultural or language skills is the second most important skill workers feel they need to develop to improve their performance as an NDIS worker (Outpost Consulting, 2017). Indigenous participants indicated that they were keen to be able to choose Indigenous support workers.

Meeting the needs of CALD and Indigenous participants will require that cultural competency is built into all levels of the NDIS, including skills of staff. And it will require training in how to engage credentialed interpreters, translators and bicultural workers. Staff will need to build their knowledge and skills in developing linguistic and culturally responsive person centred tools (AMPARO Advocacy, 2016, p10).

## **An understanding of the NDIS**

To work effectively in an NDIS environment, workers clearly need a solid understanding of the objectives and principles of the NDIS and the underlying legislative framework.

In an evaluation of the NDIS trial site in Mackay, almost all survey respondents felt they needed to improve their understanding about some aspect of the NDIS, such as the planning and review process; how services are funded/new business models; and social insurance concepts and principles (Outpost Consulting, 2017, p11).

## **Strong interpersonal skills**

In order to liaise with and build relationships with families and stakeholders, to work collaboratively with other service providers and informal networks and to support community inclusion, workers need strong interpersonal skills, including:

- communication skills;
- the capacity to build relationships of trust;
- the ability to manage stakeholder relationships;
- networking skills; and
- the ability to work in a team.

## **Safe work practices**

A number of stakeholders emphasised the importance of training in safe work practices. In the past there were a lot of activities people with disability weren't allowed to do because they were considered too high risk. But in order to empower people with disability to exercise choice and control, we need to rethink risk management and try and find ways to help people do what they want to do safely (Roslyn Loader, LAC Mackay, Deb Selway, Workability Cairns).

## **Community inclusion training**

Training in community inclusion is regarded essential (Deb Ragout, Belonging Matters). People need to learn about community development. How do you connect with the community and help people connect and participate? It's not just about taking people out into the community, but also considering how to promote inclusion and authentic relationships.

## **Business and marketing skills**

In a competitive environment, business skills will be increasingly important. Workers need skills in marketing and customer service to effectively promote their, or their organisation's services to individuals and families in order to attract and retain customers.

When asked what skills they need to improve their performance as an NDIS worker, the top response was business skills (Outpost Consulting, 2017).

## **The need to distinguish skill requirements of different roles**

A theme that emerged from some research and also interviews, is that different roles in the NDIS environment will require different skill sets and levels of training. Specifically, people mentioned that managers will need to develop new skills and promote values and a culture that supports the principles and objectives of the NDIS. They also need skills to manage funding differently under the NDIS. Matching and rostering demands will be more intense and they need to be able to embed culturally competent processes and values in their organisations.

Stakeholders also identified the unique needs of the new 'support coordination' role. One organisation identified a market for training people with this skill set. This role could also play a part in engaging and supporting CALD and Indigenous participants.

## **Features of effective programs and approaches**

We identified the following features of effective approaches to developing the core skills and knowledge needed in the NDIS environment.

## Focus on values and mindsets

A number of stakeholders said the most effective training is values based. Training needs to challenge support workers to examine their own values and assumptions and the extent to which they help or hinder people with a disability envisioning a 'good life' and supporting them to achieve it.

*"You need to equip people with the right mindset" (key informant)*

## The value of mentoring, supervision and collaboration

It's clear from research and from interviews, that just giving workers training and information is not enough to equip them with the necessary capabilities. There needs to be follow-up and reflection after training, some form of supervision and mentoring, and opportunities to collaborate with peers.

A study by Shepherd and Meehan (2013) suggested follow-up could take the form of 'booster sessions' or some other form of professional supervision that allows the worker to reflect on how they have applied the training in their work with clients (p39).

To quote a participant in their study:

*"You know, you can sit in a room and listen for 2 days and you get it. But it's just so different putting it into real life. So I think sometimes little booster sessions would help. You know, one month later, 2 months later – how did you find that you dealt with this after the training?"*

Laws et al (2010) also acknowledge that 'supervisors of direct service support staff play an essential role in the development of staff competency, direction of services, and in ensuring that consumers of services are receiving person-centered supports that are appropriate, inclusive, and maximize their independence.'

This was confirmed in interviews with service providers at trial sites (Outpost Consulting, 2017) who highlighted the value of professional supervision and reflection for support workers, and the challenge this poses in a casualised mobile workforce.

*"The biggest risk in a casualised workforce is communicating ethics and values without regular team meetings. Organisationally we might have a mentoring or supervision role, community of practice – opportunities to connect- not just be a free-lancer" (service provider).*

One service provider, Aftercare, has taken the emphasis off high end clinical supervision and introduced a community practice model where people work collaboratively, coming together in teams to work through hypothetical situations and develop responses. This affirms the idea that no one individual is 'saving the day' but they are all part of a collaborative process.

## Learning in partnership

A number of stakeholders identified the value of training people with disability and staff and families together (Margaret Ward and Deb Ragout, *Belonging Matters*).

Sometimes, people with disability and their families attend training about what's possible, only to find that when they return to a service and try and put the training into practice, they're told it's not possible. Professionals need training as well as people with disability and families.

Some stakeholders think the best training for support workers is learnt on the job from the participant and their family (Margaret Ward).

## The need for wide and varied learning opportunities

The needs of people with disability are varied, so it makes sense that workers should be able to access varied and diverse training to suit the circumstances. In addition to the core skills and knowledge required of all workers, ideally workers can also access training focused on specific areas such as mental health, or medication management, or understanding different disabilities.

Also, people learn in different ways so need a range of delivery methods. Providing reading, audio material, discussion and mentoring are important (Deb Ragout).

## Face to face is best

Stakeholders offering training in this area recommend face to face approaches, with time for space and reflection.

*"Most courses are offered online and that's a problem. There needs to be more face to face, practical work. That's where you learn in that sort of field" (key informant)*

## Adequacy of current training and education

There's a consistent view that current qualifications, particularly Certificate III and IV in Individual Support (Disability), vary in quality and often don't equip workers with the mindset and skills needed to support people with a disability in the NDIS environment.

*"The problem often with courses is that they teach attitudes towards people with disability, and sometimes these are wrong, and don't fit with the NDIS principles. For example, they don't assume recovery, they assume a fixed state and dependency. They're not skilling workers to assist people with disability to exercise choice and control." (key informant)*

*"Certificate IV can really vary depending on the content, quality and leadership." (key informant)*

While there are some quality non-accredited programs available, many don't fit the bill. There are significant gaps and there isn't much funding to develop training to fill those gaps (key informant).

## A framework for essential skills and attributes

This framework, illustrated at Figure 1 below, describes a set of skills, knowledge and attributes that underpin successful performance in NDIS work, that is, collaborating with people with disability to assist them achieve their goals set out in their NDIS plans.

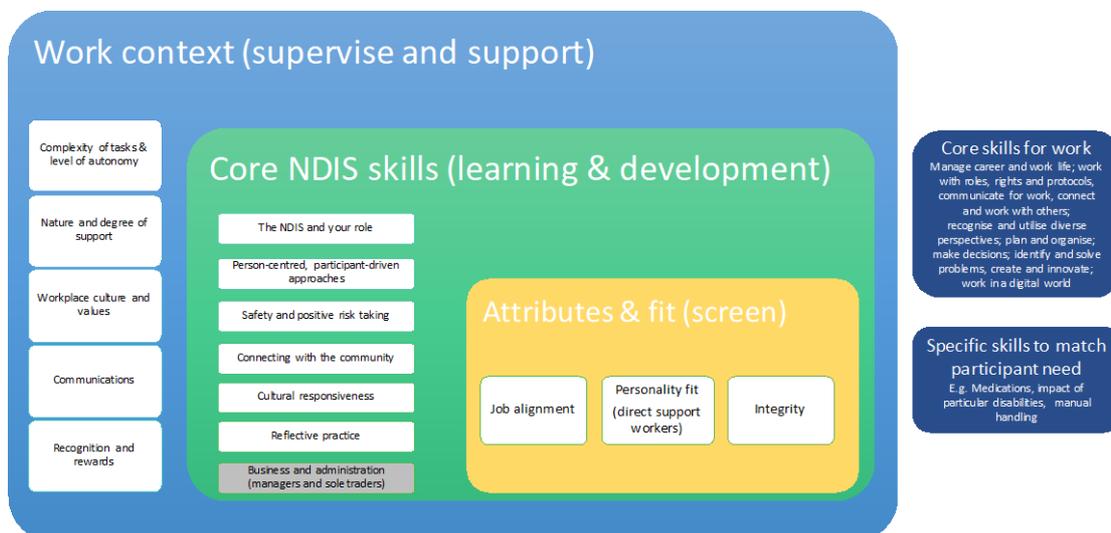
This framework is a way of conceptualising and articulating the key requirements for all types of NDIS workers.

The framework outlines three attributes that are intrinsic to a person and are unlikely to be developed through teaching and learning.

Beyond this, there are some core skills that all NDIS workers require can be developed through different learning and development approaches.

These skills and attributes sit within a work context that influences how well people will be able to apply their skills and attributes for the benefit of the NDIS participant. The work context includes the employing organisation (if there is one) and the employing participant (and their family) both of whom will be responsible for how the job is structured, monitored and supported.

**Figure 1: Framework for essential skills and attributes for workers to assist NDIS participants achieve their goals**



# Essential skills and attributes

## Attributes and fit

Three areas emerged from the research as being a critical basis for successful NDIS work. These are attributes that are intrinsic to individuals and not easy to develop through teaching and learning approaches. NDIS work is unlikely to be suitable for people who do not come with these attributes.

### 1. Personality fit (for direct support workers)

It is recognised that, more than anything, direct support workers need to have a 'personality fit' with the person they are working with. In the past 'fit' described a synergy between a worker and an organisation, but now it is about matching the personalities of a worker and the participant. The personality fit attribute may include having similar interests and similar values. It may also include cultural considerations, if participants are looking for someone who understands their language or has a lived experience of their culture. Personality fit is highly individualised and involves an element of 'gut instinct', therefore, screening for a personality fit needs the input of the participant.

This requirement is important for direct support workers but not as relevant for managers or coordinators who are not in regular contact with the participant.

### 2. Job alignment

Alignment between the job's requirements and an employee's personal goals or aspirations will generate greater engagement. Participants are looking for workers who are committed and willing to work with them for a long time. Organisations, too, benefit from a stable workforce with limited turnover. When workers enjoy what they do, play to their strengths and their work aligns with their personal values, they have increased job satisfaction which is in turn associated with a more committed, stable and productive workforce.

### 3. Integrity

Trustworthiness, honesty and respect are elements of integrity that NDIS participants and their families repeatedly emphasise as critical to successful NDIS work. There are differing views about whether character and integrity can be taught or are set at an early age. Research suggests that a significant amount of moral development occurs before adulthood (Williams and Dewett, 2005). Ideally, people would come to NDIS jobs with these core values. This does not mean that awareness and sensitivity to ethical behaviour cannot be enhanced through education, workplace culture and leadership.

## Core NDIS skills

The core skill areas are a combination of:

- Knowledge – what someone knows in a theoretical sense
- Understanding – how they link it to their personal experience
- Skills – how they put their knowledge and understanding into practice at work (Ithaca Group, 2017)

Different NDIS roles will require different levels of skills in these areas. For example, within community connections, support coordinators may need a focus on identifying and linking in with services in partnership with participants, while support workers may need to focus more on establishing opportunities for everyday interactions and personal connections.

There will also be other specific skill sets that individuals will need to gain to provide the best services for particular participants, depending on their needs for example assisting with medications, mental health training, behaviour support etc.

### **1. Understanding the NDIS and your role**

Understanding the NDIS involves having a working understanding of the goals and principles of the scheme and how it works (including terminology, stakeholders, processes and systems).

There is also a need to understand what this means for roles within the sector, particularly how to shift practice from providing support to facilitating goals, how to work effectively in an insurance context where frontline staff will be increasingly accountable for participant outcomes. For managers and sole traders, a more detailed understanding is needed of the NDIS legislation and rules and their responsibilities within that framework.

### **2. Person-centred, user-led approaches**

Person-centred, user-directed approaches underpin the NDIS. While these approaches are not new, evidence shows they have not generally been used to guide the provision of support in the past but are central to how support needs to be provided into the future as participants are handed choice and control over their lives. NDIS workers at all levels need deep understanding of how to implement person-centredness at a practical level. Importantly, NDIS workers need to enter into genuine partnerships with participants, their families and other informal and paid supports to tailor support that meets the individual needs. They also need to understand that there are long-standing barriers for people with disability and families in taking on decision-making, and have the skills to empower participants and families to assume power and control.

### **3. Safety and positive risk taking**

Dignity of risk has a central role within a person-centred service system based on choice and control. Participants are usually in the best position to instruct support services on the risks they wish to take but NDIS workers should know how to empower participants to decide on the level of risks they are prepared to take with their health and safety.

Risk taking needs to be balanced with protecting safety, particularly for vulnerable participants. Recent inquiries into abuse of people with disability in institutional settings have identified that particular groups are at increased risk of violence, abuse and neglect. An NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Commission will have monitoring and oversight systems in place to safeguard participant safety. NDIS workers also need to work within these frameworks and be trained to recognise, respond to and prevent incidents that threaten safety.

#### **4. Connecting with the community**

The NDIS has a strong focus on community and economic participation. People will increasingly be choosing activities based around personal interests, rather than what was made available to them. NDIS workers need to be able to support participants to access mainstream and community services as well as informal supports which align with the interests and needs of their participants. This requires skills in identifying and linking in with a broad range of services and networks, and facilitating more inclusive communities. NDIS workers will need strong interpersonal skills, including the ability to build relationships of trust, manage stakeholder relationships and work in a team.

#### **5. Cultural responsiveness**

People with disability from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds or Aboriginal or Torres Strait backgrounds often face additional barriers to having their needs met because of limited understanding of culturally inclusive ways of working. Workers need knowledge and skills to engage with participants from diverse backgrounds, including how to effectively use interpreters and to respond to different ways of understanding disability.

#### **6. Reflective practice**

Reflective practice is the ability to reflect on one's actions and engage in a process of continual learning. This is a key skill for NDIS workers who are often working alone with participants. Changing demand for disability services in a residential setting will result in many services being delivered unsupervised at the client's home. Reflective practice is a way for workers to actively learn from everyday situations and concerns and make judgements about what should be developed or changed to improve practice.

#### **7. Business skills (for managers and sole traders)**

Managers and sole traders will need to build strong commercial capabilities as they begin to operate in a more competitive business environment. Organisations will need to understand legal and business frameworks that impact on operations, different models for service delivery, effective governance and a market focus. Skills in matching workers to participants and rostering workers to provide support when and where participants need it also need to be developed.

#### **Work context<sup>1</sup>**

Research tells us that worker performance can be affected by one or more of a range of factors relevant to the work context. These factors influence whether a worker with the right attributes and the right skills can deliver the best service to the NDIS participant.

These factors fall within the purview of the employing organisation and/or the employing participant. Organisations and participants (and families) can structure jobs and tasks and culture and support to allow NDIS workers to do their jobs to the best of their ability. Factors within the work context include:

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<sup>1</sup> This section draws on the research undertaken by Ithaca Group for the Department of Employment and Training in defining a set of Core Skills for Work. See Ithaca Group. (2015). *Core Skills for Work Overview*, <https://www.education.gov.au/core-skills-work-developmental-framework-0>

- **Complexity of tasks and level of autonomy** – work performance will diminish if the complexity of the tasks an individual is required to undertake is beyond their level of capability and confidence. Similarly, individuals at any stage benefit from some form of autonomy to allow them to creatively problem solve and make decisions, however, the appropriate level of autonomy depends on their proficiency in the job
- **Nature and degree of support** – assisting workers to gain information and insights, identify critical issues, set priorities and access opportunities for learning and development will have a significant impact on work performance. Effective processes which make it easier for the worker to fulfil their duties are essential. For example, Chenoweth and Ward's (2015) 'Seven step' process steps out how a support worker can effectively implement a user-directed arrangement.
- **Workplace values and culture** – values and culture underpin expectations and can support or inhibit an environment that fosters collaboration, creativity and innovation
- **Recognition and rewards** – individuals are significantly motivated to do well by extrinsic rewards – usually financial. Unfair pay can be a strong de-motivator. However, motivation is also driven by intrinsic rewards, such as having a meaningful purpose, having choices on how to do things, being competent at their work, and making progress toward a purpose (Thomas, 2009).

## Approaches to identifying and developing NDIS workers

### Screening

Screening is useful for discovering workers who have the right attributes to enter the industry, or those might be a good personality fit for particular participants. Screening can also be used to assist the disability workforce to identify what new skills they need in an NDIS environment. Options for screening potential workers include:

- Self-assessment tools. The Attributional Tool by Aftercare, for example, has been developed to identify workers with the right attributes for an NDIS mental health support worker role. It can also be used by applicants to understand what skills they need to develop more before they can take up a role and how they can access those skills
- Value-based interviews. Service providers are increasingly using questioning that will uncover the values of employees such as how is the work meaningful to the candidate and are the applicant's values in harmony with the values of the NDIS. These values can be weighted higher than traditional selection criteria such as knowledge, skills and past experience.
- Advice from educators. Educators may be in a position to comment on an individual's suitability for the industry, particularly for new entrants, based on the attributes they demonstrated during their studies

- Personal references. Many organisations, families and participants are saying that they have most success with employees who are recommended through a friend or someone that they trust.

## Learning and development approaches

Specific learning and development approaches are required to develop the core skills outlined in the above framework. As noted above, these approaches are not just about participating in training courses. There are a broad range of ways for people to develop skills. Learning and development approaches include:

- Partnerships between disability service providers and the education and training sector to conduct research and trial collaborative work placement models
- Programs to build the skills of people with disability and their carers to train workers
- Mentoring, communities of practice, peer support and structured professional supervision to provide opportunities to reflect on and improve practice
- Role model/experienced service providers providing professional development to less experienced organisations
- Accredited training modules, ideally combined with workplace learning
- Non-accredited training, usually used to meet a specific need or skill gap

Efforts will need to be made to ensure participation in learning and development is equally distributed. Those with low educational attainment and low literacy, those who are older or in low-skill occupations and those who work part-time are less likely to get employer-supported training (NCVER, 2017). To ensure a diverse range of skilled people are available to support participants, particular efforts will be needed to tailor learning and development offerings to suit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

## Next steps

The next part of the project will focus on options for building the core skills of workers. It will involve a stocktake of existing learning and development offerings and an analysis of how the offerings align with the findings above. The core skills presented in this document may be tweaked and refined to reflect the findings of the next stage of the research.

# TRAINING PRODUCTS STOCKTAKE

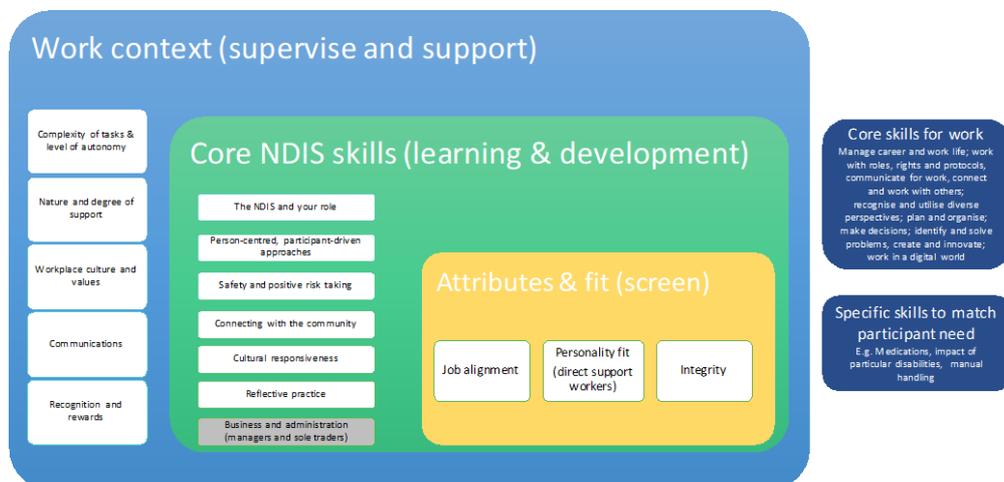
## Introduction

Successful performance in NDIS work, that is, collaborating with people with disability to assist them achieve their goals set out in their NDIS plans, is underpinned by a supportive work context, some core skills and knowledge as well as the right personal attributes that allow a good match between the worker and the participant and the worker and the job.

The framework below is a way of conceptualising and articulating the key requirements for all types of NDIS workers. It outlines three personal attributes that are intrinsic to an individual and are best assessed through screening approaches and seven core skills that all NDIS workers require can be developed through different learning and development approaches. It also illustrates how these core skills and attributes sit within a work context that influences how well people will be able to apply their skills and attributes for the benefit of the NDIS participant.

The work context is largely determined by the employing organisation and the employing participant and their family. In most cases, both are responsible for how the job is structured, monitored and supported<sup>2</sup>. The managers' of NDIS organisations and NDIS participants and families often need to access learning and development products and resources to know how to establish the right work context for NDIS workers to perform their work successfully.

There are some other more generic and more specific skills which NDIS workers may need. The generic skills are called the Core Skills for Work and are the non-technical knowledge, skills and understanding that are needed for any job (see <https://www.education.gov.au/core-skills-work-developmental-framework-tools-and-resources>). The specific skills are the knowledge, skills and understanding that might be needed to provide the best service for a particular NDIS participant, but will not be required for all participants. These generic and specific skills have not been the focus of this work.



<sup>2</sup> In arrangements where the participant directly employs an individual, an NDIS organisation is not involved in defining the work context and the supervision and support is provided by the participant and their family.

## Product Stocktake

Having identified the work context, the core skills and the kind of attributes and fit required of disability workers in the NDIS environment, the following is a list of some courses and workshops currently available (or that have been offered recently) to skill workers in these areas. In the case of attributes and fit, some screening or attributional tools are listed.

This list is by no means exhaustive. It's a starting point, intended to guide those interested in workforce development, to some products and approaches that align with what's needed in the current environment and to equip workers to support people with disability to envision and create a 'good life'. Products are on the list either because they were recommended to us by stakeholders or members of the Reference Group for this project, or because they were discovered as part of our research, and the content and approach appear to align with what the literature and stakeholders suggest is optimal. Some evaluative commentary is provided where information was available.

The stocktake covers different approaches to learning and development, in recognition that people have differing needs. For example, some NDIS workers will be looking for deep skills and knowledge that they can apply at a high level across a range of contexts. These workers may benefit from a formal qualification. Others will be looking for some foundation skills and knowledge to set them up for working with a particular participant and their family. These workers may benefit from attending workshops or webinars.

The stocktake is organised into three parts to align with the NDIS Work Context, Skills and Attributes framework above:

- Establish the best work context
- Develop core skills
- Screen for right attributes

It is clear from the stocktake that there are some areas where training products are in short supply. There appears to be a number of options to build skills about the NDIS and person-centred, user-led approaches, but less available on cultural competence within the NDIS and reflective practice. Furthermore, some of the training products that are available are time-limited, particularly those offering cultural competence, and have been funded as part of provider readiness initiatives due to expire in 2018. It will take many years to build a competent NDIS workforce and products need to be available in a funded or fee-for-service capacity for the longer-term.

Finally, the importance of the training delivery cannot be overestimated. High quality products which are delivered by trainers without the sufficient expertise or understanding of the environment or values that align with the NDIS will not contribute to a competent workforce. Our research has shown that the quality of delivery of accredited units is highly variable across RTOs, and that participants and their families don't always value those qualifications in workers. It is important to look for training products that are delivered in a way that encourages participants to critically examine the values that underpin support of people with disability and that emphasise a strengths-based, person-centred approach.

## Establish the Best Work Context

The work context can significantly impact how a worker supports a participant. A range of factors determine the work context. In the NDIS environment, where participants lead the provision of support, participants and their families/support networks strongly influence how support workers work. For this reason, it's important people with disability and their families are skilled and equipped to train support workers in the unique requirements of participants and how to make optimal use of NDIS funding and processes.

The work context is also influenced by the values, attitudes and approaches of managers. Managers need to establish the right workplace culture, ensure the complexity of tasks and level of autonomy aligns with workers' skills, provide the right type and degree of supervision and support and offer fair recognition and rewards for work. The right leadership and management training will help managers develop these skills.

The training programs which have been identified to assist managers, leaders, NDIS participants and families establish the right work context are on pages 1-5 of the stocktake. Many of the programs assist with developing the identified core skills as well as establishing the right work context.

Program	Provider	Target group	Page
1. Graduate Certificate in Business (NDIS Studies)	University of Southern Queensland	Managers and leaders	1
2. Graduate Certificate in Disability Inclusion	Griffith University	Managers and leaders	1
3. Graduate Certificate in NDIS Business Development	University of New England	Managers and leaders	2
4. Workforce Planning Skills Training	Response Employment and Training	Managers and leaders	2
5. Leadership development – the emerging leader	National Disability Practitioners	Emerging managers	3
6. Talks that matter	Belonging Matters	Participants & families (with workers)	3
7. Working well together to build a good life	Griffith University	Participants & families (with workers)	4
8. Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope	Parent2Parent	Participants & families (with workers)	4
9. NDIS Participant Readiness and Targeted Strategies	AMPARO	Participants, families and managers	

## Develop Core Skills

The framework identifies a key set of six core skills and knowledge that NDIS workers must have in order to effectively support NDIS participants in implementing their plans. These are the NDIS and your role; person-centred, user-led approaches; safety and positive risk-taking; connecting with the community; and intercultural understanding. There is a seventh skill - business and administration – which is mostly important for managers and sole traders. Descriptions of each of the core skills can be found in the accompanying Essential Skills and Attributes report.

The training programs which have been identified to assist support workers, managers and coordinators develop these skills are on pages 6-12 of the stocktake. Some of the programs identified above under “Establish the best work context” also provide opportunities to develop these core skills.

Program	Provider	Target group	Page
10. Certificate IV in Disability	Multiple providers	Support workers and team leaders	5
11. Certificate III in Individual Support	Multiple providers	Support workers	5
12. Disability Induction Program	NDS	Support workers	6
13. Getting NDIS-ready to deliver services to CALD communities	MDA and DiverseWorks	Managers	6
14. NDIS/FYI project	Connections Inc	Indigenous participants, families, mental health workers	7
15. Optimal Individual Service Design	CRU	Participants, families and workers	7
16. Every moment has potential	Greystanes Disability Services and Living with Disability Research Centre	Support workers	8
17. I believe in Inclusion, but I'm not sure how to do it	Belonging Matters	Participants, families, and workers)	8
18. Making the NDIS your business	NDS	Rural and remote managers	9
19. Support Coordination	Disability Services Consulting	Support Coordinators	9
20. Moments of Truth	Realise performance	Support workers	10
21. Disability and the good life	University of NSW	Support workers and managers	10
22. Support Coordination in practice	Support Coordination Academy	Support coordinators and team leaders	11
23. From Community Tourism to Inclusion	Support Coordination Academy	Support coordinators and team leaders	11

## Screen for Right Attributes

Screening is useful for discovering workers who have the right attributes to enter the industry, or those might be a good personality fit for particular participants. Screening can also be used to assist the disability workforce to identify what new skills they need in an NDIS environment. Options for screening potential workers include value-based interviews and personal references but increasingly online screening tools are being used successfully to understand if worker have the right attributes. For the NDIS, the right attributes are a personality fit with the participant, integrity (honesty, trustworthiness, respect).

Four screening tools have been identified which may be useful for organisations and participants wishing to find workers with the right attributes. These are detailed on pages 13-14 of the stocktake.

Program	Provider	Target group	Page
24. Attributional Tool	Aftercare	Mental health workers	12
25. Qualitate Attributional Approach	Qualitate	All NDIS workers	12
26. Harrison Assessments	Harrison Assessments Australia	All NDIS workers	13
27. Care Advantage	Care Source	All NDIS workers	13

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## Introduction

Outpost Consulting has been commissioned by the Workability Queensland consortium to investigate the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to support choice and control for NDIS participants and to scope the requirements for training programs to upskill the workforce.

The first phase of this work is a review of literature on the skill needs of NDIS workers. Findings are captured in this report.

## Background

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) represents a significant shift in the way people with disability are supported in Australia. Under this insurance model, the Australian Government covers the lifetime costs of disability-related care for eligible individuals. (Walsh & Johnson, 2013). This includes those born with or acquiring a disability before the age of 65 whose disability is permanent and significantly affects their functional capacity. The NDIS includes people with intellectual, physical, sensory, and psychosocial disability. It represents a shift from block-funded services to individualised funding of disability support, with support planning as the process by which the value of an individual's funding package is determined, their goals and supports identified, and implementation strategies devised (NDIS, 2014, Collings et al, 2016, p272).

This model offers individuals' choice and control over how these supports are provided. It shifts the authority of service-direction from the service provider to the service-user. Support services are now required to respond to a user-driven market, and it's anticipated that the market will change as people with disability imagine a better life for themselves.

For traditional service providers, the NDIS is seen as a "fundamental shift in social policy and requires a parallel transformation in the structure and nature of the workforce needed to implement it" (National Disability Services, 2014, p1). But for services that were already operating using user-directed approaches, the NDIS institutionalises their existing practices.

The *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act (2013)* includes guiding principles for actions under the Act, which now shape the way service providers are legally obliged to support people with disability (see Appendix A for a full list of the principles). Among many others, these include:

- People with disability should be supported to participate in and contribute to social and economic life to the extent of their ability.

- People with disability should be supported to exercise choice, including in relation to taking reasonable risks, in the pursuit of their goals and the planning and delivery of their supports.
- Innovation, quality, continuous improvement, contemporary best practice and effectiveness in the provision of supports to people with disability are to be promoted.
- People with disability should be involved in decision making processes that affect them, and where possible make decisions for themselves.
- The cultural and linguistic background, and the gender, of people with disability should be taken into account.
- The supportive relationships, friendships and connections with others of people with disability should be recognised.

## The role of support workers in a user-directed environment

The NDIS significantly changes the traditional role of support workers. While some providers have operated according to these principles for some time, for other organisations, it represents a new way of thinking and working.

In their study of the role of support workers within the NDIS, Chenoweth and Ward (2015) draw a distinction between professionalised service and crafted service—an idea that emerged from the work of Illich, McKnight, Zola, Caplan and Shaiken (1977):

*‘Nearly forty years ago, Illich, McKnight, Zola, Caplan, and Shaiken (1977) argued that the task of “enabling those who lack the capacity to fend for themselves to lead fuller, safer and healthier lives” could be considered in two ways. It can be seen as a service where people are considered to need professional help, or as a service where people can craft a good life for themselves with the guidance of others in trusting relationships.’ (pp6-7)*

The professionalisation of services stems from the belief that people have ‘problems’ and experts have ‘solutions’ (Illich et al., 1977) People with disability are identified by their deficits and professionals identify the tasks that need to be done for them. Prerequisite training and certification ensures the tasks are performed properly and that a professional can transfer their skills across a wide range of people. The professional’s worth is measured by their level of training, length of service and commensurate remuneration.

On the other hand, a user-directed service suggests a ‘crafting’ of support to meet a person’s ‘need or fancy’ (Illich et al., 1977). Ideally, the support-worker comes unfettered by expectations or limitations, and works with people with disability to fulfil their personal plans and goals. Over time, support-workers learn how best to do this guided by service-users. They gain trust by getting to know the people well, by following their direction, and by assisting them to discern what is best for them within

the complexity of their personal relationships, capacities, and situations. A support worker's worth is measured more through their achievements, problem solving and trust building with people with disability, their family and allies.

## Skills and attributes required under the NDIS

In the 1950s and 1960s, 'good' direct care staff were considered to be those who stayed in their job the longest, received high ratings from their supervisors, were neat and clean and arrived to work on time (Dodevska and Vassos, 2013).

Things have changed somewhat.

And the introduction of the NDIS will bring more change again. It will alter the role of the disability support worker and the balance of skills and attributes they need. In the past, traditional services emphasised technical or 'hard' skills of workers. Services offered activities, based on the skill sets of staff. There was a focus on instructing and teaching. And workers tended to work set hours (SDF Community Inclusion Initiative—Community of Practice Topic 2: Workforce)

In the new environment, where customers are supported to become independent and workers support their inclusion in the community, workers need to draw more on 'soft' skills. These include, communication, flexibility, problem-solving, team work, empathy and negotiation (SDF Community Inclusion Initiative—Community of Practice Topic 2: Workforce). The skill set of disability support workers will need to expand to include brokering, planning and advocacy. The responsibilities of support workers will be less defined, and because more people with disabilities are likely to elect to receive support in their home, support workers will often work in less controlled and more isolated environments.

These changes require an expanded set of skills and attributes that many disability support workers already have, but which others will need to develop. Drawing on the findings of several pieces of research<sup>3</sup>, it's possible to group them as follows:

- a) the skills needed to provide support according to NDIS principles;
- b) the skills needed to work effectively in a changed environment; and
- c) new knowledge requirements.

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<sup>3</sup> Particularly Chenoweth & Ward (2015); SDF Community Inclusion Initiative—Community of Practice Topic 2: Workforce; Outpost Consulting (2017)

## a) The skills needed to provide support according to NDIS principles

There's a set of skills needed to effectively support people with disability in a user-directed environment and according to the NDIS principles. They can be categorised as follows:

- strong interpersonal skills;
- the ability to take a person-centred, strengths-based approach;
- the ability to support participation and inclusion;
- flexibility and innovation;
- problem-solving skills; and
- cultural competence.

### Strong interpersonal skills

Research is showing that, especially from the viewpoint of participants, strong interpersonal skills are essential in a user-directed environment. An Australian study (Further Inclusion Learning and Development (FIELD), 2006) found that people with disabilities consistently value direct care staff who:

- have a positive attitude towards individuals;
- are practical and efficient workers;
- treat individuals with dignity;
- display understanding, compassion, empathy and respect towards those they are caring for;
- are friendly, polite, honest and trustworthy; and
- directly communicate with those they are caring for.

Most of these traits fall in the category of interpersonal qualities/skills.

Similarly, a UK study found that service users with intellectual disability living in a residential forensic service in Northern England, placed importance on interpersonal qualities when asked what qualities they valued in their direct care staff (e.g. calm, caring, honest, understanding, develops rapport, willing to help, provide a sense of protection with their behaviour) (Clarkson, et al, 2009).

This has been confirmed in recent evaluations in NDIS trial sites in Queensland (Outpost Consulting, 2017), which also found that participants and service providers both hold the view that support workers' skills and qualifications are secondary to personal attributes. Participants want people that do not judge them and are friendly, respectful and flexible rather than highly qualified.

*"Organisations that employ on values is a good idea." (participant)*

*"Flexibility is very important – the activity you want to do might change or the time might change or there might be an emergency situation." (participant)*

NDIS support workers will be expected to liaise with and build relationships with families. Previously, the focus was on providing a designated service to an individual, now the service provider needs to actively recognise and take into account other supportive relationships and connections in an individual's life.

The interpersonal skills required, include:

- *The ability to build relationships of trust*—building trust is essential to effectively supporting people with disability, It requires that workers show respect, have empathy and understanding, that they listen to and act on the needs of participants, and that they're reliable—they do what they say they're going to do.
- *The ability to manage stakeholder relationships*—support workers work in complex environments, often navigating and balancing the diverse views and needs of different stakeholders. Managing these relationships effectively requires that workers are good communicators and negotiators, are diplomatic, confidential, and able to advocate for the best interests of participants.
- *“Support workers in user-directed services have more complex environments in which to work, with service-users learning how to direct their service, and the additional involvement of families and informal networks. Support-workers have to navigate what might be considered to be conflicts of interest among the many stakeholders. They require skills and discernment to navigate the messiness of these relationships.” (Chenoweth, 2015, p49)*
- *Strong communication skills*—support workers need to communicate regularly and appropriately with participants, families and informal networks, community connections and other service providers.
- *Networking skills*—in the NDIS environment, the support worker helps the participant to engage in the community. This will require them to network and draw on the services of other organisations and individuals.
- *The ability to work in a team*—supporting people with disability is often a collaborative effort and calls for team players who know how to work effectively alongside families and other supporters.

### The ability to take a person-centred, strengths-based approach

Workers need to be committed to taking a person-centred, strengths-based approach, putting people with disability at the centre of decision-making, enhancing their strengths and building on their characteristics.

A strengths approach attempts to identify the positive basis of the person's resources (or what may need to be added) and strengths that will lay the basis to address the challenges resulting from the problems (Hammond, 2010, p3)

It requires workers to:

- focus on trusting and workable relationships;

- empower people to take a lead in their own care process;
- work collaboratively on mutually agreed upon goals;
- draw on the personal resources of motivation and hope; and
- create sustainable change through learning and experiential growth (Hammond, 2010, p3)

### The ability to support participation and inclusion

Workers need the knowledge and skills to provide just the right amount of support to enable education, employment, recreation and lifestyle choices. This includes knowing how to step back from providing ongoing support, when the time is right.

The worker needs to be 'able to honour a service-user's plan and to work with them towards goals of equity, inclusion and personal growth' (Chenoweth, 2015, pp45-46).

### Flexibility and innovation

The role of a support worker is largely driven by the person they support. It will change from person to person and from day to day. Workers need to be able to let go of assumptions about how, when and where the service will be provided, and to set aside their own knowledge and experiences when necessary (Chenoweth, 2015, p45). They need to be flexible, innovative, creative and resourceful.

In the words of an experienced support worker:

*"...even after nearly 13 years, there's still situations I'm thrown into when I think "What do I do now!"*  
(Shepherd and Meehan, 2013, p41)

### Problem-solving skills

Chenoweth and Ward (2015) identified problem-solving strategies as critical to enabling support workers to improve their performance (p28).

*"A user-directed service relies on problem-solving strategies that are timely and preventative, and where the locus of decision-making is as close as possible to the service-user."* (Chenoweth, 2015, p48)

Support workers need to build trust and work with all parties to help solve problems. They also need to communicate regularly with service-users and their informal networks, to prevent some problems from arising in the first place.

When problems do inevitably surface, workers need the skills to solve them quickly and locally, working with families to source particular skills and knowledge as needed (Chenoweth and Ward, 2015, p47)

## Cultural competence

It's been estimated that, nationally, approximately 21.9% of NDIS participants should come from a CALD background. While the NDIS is still in its early days, the NDIA has acknowledged that, at this stage, all sites have a much lower proportion of CALD participants than expected, constituting only 4% of approved plans as at 30 June 2016 (AMPARO Advocacy, 2016, p5).

These low levels of participation highlight the need for a culturally competent and responsive NDIS system that will also work to build the capacity of individuals, families and communities from CALD backgrounds to understand their rights, to know what a 'good life' looks like and to be able to fully participate in the NDIS (AMPARO Advocacy, 2016, p6).

This was confirmed in a recent evaluation of NDIS trial sites in Queensland (Outpost Consulting, 2017). NDIS workers identified cultural or language skills as the second most important skill they need to improve their performance as an NDIS worker (Outpost Consulting, 2017). Indigenous participants indicated that they were keen to be able to choose Indigenous support workers.

*"[There's] not enough of our own [workers]. We need to get the young ones interested." (participant)*

Meeting the needs of CALD participants will require that cultural competency is built into all levels of the NDIS, including skills of staff. And it will require training in how to engage credentialed interpreters, translators and bicultural workers. Staff will need to build their knowledge and skills in developing linguistic and culturally responsive person centred tools (AMPARO Advocacy, 2016, p10).

### **b) The skills needed to work effectively in a changed environment**

The introduction of the NDIS will bring significant change to the way some support workers work. It opens opportunities for individuals to be employed directly by families, operating on their own, without the support of an employing organisation. More support workers will work in homes of people with disability, and be more isolated from peers and supervisors.

This has implications for the skills required of workers in those environments. They'll need:

- personal accountability and awareness;
- career management skills; and
- business skills.

### **Personal accountability and awareness**

Those who work autonomously will need to take responsibility for their own work practices, learning and skill development. They will need the self-awareness to reflect on their own practice, and to change their approach if required, so as to

meet the NDIS principle of 'innovation, quality, continuous improvement, contemporary best practice and effectiveness in the provision of supports to people with disability.'

### Career management skills

With some NDIS workers less attached to organisations and more likely to work for multiple employers (both organisations and self-managed participants), they will need skills to navigate their work lives and developing their careers.

*'With the increasing casualisation of the workforce, workers are seeking to develop career management skills. Career management skills are defined as "competencies which help individuals to identify their existing skills, develop career learning goals and take action to enhance their careers."'<sup>i</sup> (Outpost Consulting, 2017)*

### Business skills

In a competitive environment, business skills will be increasingly important. Workers need skills in marketing and customer service to effectively promote their, or their organisation's services to individuals and families in order to attract and retain customers. When asked what skills they need to improve their performance as an NDIS worker, the top response was business skills (Outpost Consulting, 2017).

### Organisational challenges

The NDIS also means changes in the way support agencies do business. For example, the matching and rostering demands will be more intense as they try to organise the right people with the right skills to be in the right place at the right time. For some organisations, this will mean developing or acquiring staff with new skill sets and developing new systems.

The more complicated environment also requires high level management skills, particularly around business process management, organisational change, and cultivating teamwork, creativity and responsiveness in a largely mobile workforce (Outpost Consulting, 2017).

### c) New knowledge requirements

To work effectively in an NDIS environment, workers clearly need a solid understanding of the objectives and principles of the NDIS and the underlying legislative framework.

In an evaluation of the NDIS trial site in Mackay, almost all survey respondents felt they needed to improve their understanding about some aspect of the NDIS, in particular:

- the role of Local Area Coordinators (LAC) (this is not surprising as the LAC had not commenced in Mackay at the time of the survey);

- the planning and review process;
- how services are funded/new business models;
- the Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) component of the NDIS; and
- social insurance concepts and principles (Outpost Consulting, 2017, p11).

## Implications for training

A key finding to emerge from the literature is the importance of interpersonal skills and 'soft skills' in an NDIS environment, especially from the point of view of participants. This view has implications for the extent, content and type of training offered to support workers.

Chenoweth and Ward (2015) found that training is not a reliable predictor of a worker's suitability for disability support work, and that a respectful attitude, shared values and respect for the service-user are more reliable indicators (p45). According to their research, 'assumptions made by support workers based on pre-requisite training can actually lead to inappropriate responses and poor service.' (p48) On the whole, participants in their research were ambivalent towards specialised training for support-workers (they did not mind if they had training or not).

They do not suggest that support-workers would not benefit from specialised disability training, but that good communication skills, the capacity to work within complex informal networks and the strategic linking with community are considered to be as important, if not more important (Chenoweth, 2016, pp30-31).

This idea challenges traditional service practices of training staff to work across a wide range of service-users and work sites, and regarding this training as the foundation for the service's quality assurance and risk-management. The view of Chenoweth and Ward is that a broad training strategy might work for some service-users whose needs can be interpreted simply, but an alternative preparation is likely to be needed for support-workers to develop a deeper understanding of a service-user's needs and to build a trusting relationship over time.

Other researchers (Cortis et al, 2013, p27) caution that if on- the-job training and experience are seen as more important to support roles than formal qualifications, training initiatives may be limited to skilling workers according to individual clients' priorities rather than a more comprehensive suite of transferable skills consistent with the professionalisation of care work.

Hatton et al (2009) compared the views of participants with the views of professionals, on the most important skills required in a user-directed environment. They aimed to develop measures of job performance for residential direct care workers and consulted with both service users and professionals. They found that while service users placed more emphasis on personal/interpersonal characteristics when discussing job performance indicators (e.g. listens, nice, kind, reliable, supports choice, honest, respectful), professionals placed more emphasis on possessing

specific knowledge and practical work skills (e.g. understands confidentiality, inclusion and person-centred principles; open-minded to change, ability to engage with people, team player, good work ethic, ability to manage risk).

Dodevska and Vassos (2013) also found that managers place more weight on the development and implementation of plans when supporting residents, whereas residents place more importance on their day-to-day interpersonal interaction (p610).

According to Shepherd and Meehan (2013, p41), there's been a long debate in the literature about the relative value of personal attributes in care versus theoretical knowledge, and it's yet to be resolved.

They refer to a literature review conducted by Evans and Moltzen (2000) which summarised the evidence showing the most effective elements of community support. These were: acceptance of the client; creating a positive atmosphere; having an expectation that change is possible; the responsiveness of the carer; providing a normalising environment and providing learning opportunities. While some of these elements may come from the personal characteristics of the support worker, these attributes can be enhanced through increased training and supervision.

Bolton (2004) has argued that the heart of the problem is the widespread perception of 'emotion work' as unskilled work, and that this is a problem for personal care workers in all fields. Bolton argues that emotion work is indeed skilled work which contains elements of discretionary content, task variety and employee control that are associated with the work of 'professionals'. It is an invisible skill that is barely recognised and poorly rewarded as it is viewed as a natural quality. But if recognised – the autonomy and higher rewards offered to 'skilled' emotion workers might be extended to lower paid workers, such as support workers.

It's possible to conclude then, that training does have value. Perhaps the issue is not so much whether support workers need training, but whether approaches to training strike the right balance between developing interpersonal and 'soft' skills and specific knowledge and practical work skills.

In an investigation aimed to address workforce capacity issues in the disability sector, the National Disability Administrators identified that the community services training package (which includes the Certificate IV in disability) focuses too heavily on the skills and knowledge required of people working in the disability field (e.g. manual handling skills, understanding of legislation, policies and procedures, assessing support needs and implementing personal support procedures) with little emphasis placed on highlighting the role that staff attitude and behaviour plays in providing quality care (National Disability Administrators, 2006).

*“With the introduction of new policies within Australia (e.g. the National Disability Insurance Scheme) that emphasise individualised funding approaches where people with disabilities and their carers will have greater say in the types of supports they receive, it is imperative that support staff are receiving appropriate training that is based on a consistent set of competencies that not only reflect competencies expected by the professional, managerial disability sector but also reflect competencies expected by people with disabilities and their carers, the people support staff service.” (Dodevska and Vassos, 2013, p611)*

## Approaches to training

As well as the content of training, it's important to consider the way training is offered in an NDIS environment.

### The need for follow-up and professional supervision

A study by Shepherd and Meehan (2013) identified the need for follow-up after training. They suggest this could take the form of 'booster sessions' or some other form of professional supervision that allows the worker to reflect on how they have applied the training in their work with clients (p39).

To quote a participant in their study:

*“You know, you can sit in a room and listen for 2 days and you get it. But it's just so different putting it into real life. So I think sometimes little booster sessions would help. You know, one month later, 2 months later – how did you find that you dealt with this after the training?”*

Laws et al (2010) also acknowledge that 'supervisors of direct service support staff play an essential role in the development of staff competency, direction of services, and in ensuring that consumers of services are receiving person-centered supports that are appropriate, inclusive, and maximize their independence.'

This was confirmed in interviews with service providers at trial sites (Outpost Consulting, 2017) who highlighted the value of professional supervision and reflection for support workers, and the challenge this poses in a casualised mobile workforce.

*“The biggest risk in a casualised workforce is communicating ethics and values without regular team meetings. Organisationally we might have a mentoring or supervision role, community of practice – opportunities to connect- not just be a free-lancer”. (service provider)*

An added challenge in the NDIS funding environment, is the lack of budget for training and supervision.

## The need to engage CALD and Indigenous workers

The NDIS will require an expanded and diverse workforce that meets the needs of NDIS participants and reflects the diversity of the disability community (Australian Government Department of Social Services, 2015). In particular, there is a need for more CALD and Indigenous workers to enter the industry and for training and recruitment strategies that accommodate their unique needs and circumstances.

## Conclusion

A review of Australian and international literature confirms that the NDIS environment will bring a shift in the kinds of knowledge, skills and attitudes required to support people with a disability to live a 'good life'. Workers will need excellent interpersonal skills, cultural competency, the values that underpin a person-centred and strengths-based approach and a solid understanding of the purposes and processes of the NDIS. It's not that these weren't important in the past. It's that they are of utmost importance now.

Some service providers and organisations have long recognised this and have well-developed approaches and resources for building these capabilities. But across the sector, approaches are patchy and inconsistent. There's a need for a better understanding of products and approaches that are working well to develop the skills and knowledge of both managers and support workers.

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<sup>1</sup> Neary, S., Dodd, V. and Hooley, T. (2015). *Understanding Career Management Skills: Findings From the First Phase of the CMS Leader Project*. Derby: International Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby.

# Appendix A: National Disability Insurance Scheme Principles

## 4 General principles guiding actions under this Act

(1) People with disability have the same right as other members of Australian society to realise their potential for physical, social, emotional and intellectual development.

(2) People with disability should be supported to participate in and contribute to social and economic life to the extent of their ability.

(3) People with disability and their families and carers should have certainty that people with disability will receive the care and support they need over their lifetime.

(4) People with disability should be supported to exercise choice, including in relation to taking reasonable risks, in the pursuit of their goals and the planning and delivery of their supports.

(5) People with disability should be supported to receive reasonable and necessary supports, including early intervention supports.

(6) People with disability have the same right as other members of Australian society to respect for their worth and dignity and to live free from abuse, neglect and exploitation.

(7) People with disability have the same right as other members of Australian society to pursue any grievance.

(8) People with disability have the same right as other members of Australian society to be able to determine their own best interests, including the right to exercise choice and control, and to engage as equal partners in decisions that will affect their lives, to the full extent of their capacity.

(9) People with disability should be supported in all their dealings and communications with the Agency so that their capacity to exercise choice and control is maximised in a way that is appropriate to their circumstances and cultural needs.

(10) People with disability should have their privacy and dignity respected. (11) Reasonable and necessary supports for people with disability should:

(a) support people with disability to pursue their goals and maximise their independence; and

(b) support people with disability to live independently and to be included in the community as fully participating citizens; and

(c) develop and support the capacity of people with disability to undertake activities that enable them to participate in the mainstream community and in employment.

(12) The role of families, carers and other significant persons in the lives of people with disability is to be acknowledged and respected.

(13) The role of advocacy in representing the interests of people with disability is to be acknowledged and respected, recognising that advocacy supports people with disability by:

(a) promoting their independence and social and economic participation; and

(b) promoting choice and control in the pursuit of their goals and the planning and delivery of their supports; and

(c) maximising independent lifestyles of people with disability and their full inclusion in the mainstream community.

(14) People with disability should be supported to receive supports outside the National Disability Insurance Scheme, and be assisted to coordinate these supports with the supports provided under the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

(15) Innovation, quality, continuous improvement, contemporary best practice and effectiveness in the provision of supports to people with disability are to be promoted.

(16) Positive personal and social development of people with disability, including children and young people, is to be promoted.

(17) It is the intention of the Parliament that the Ministerial Council, the Minister, the Board, the CEO and any other person or body is to perform functions and exercise powers under this Act in accordance with these principles, having regard to:

(a) the progressive implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme; and

(b) the need to ensure the financial sustainability of the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

## **5 General principles guiding actions of people who may do acts or things on behalf of others**

It is the intention of the Parliament that, if this Act requires or permits an act or thing to be done by or in relation to a person with disability by another person, the act or thing is to be done, so far as practicable, in accordance with both the general principles set out in section 4 and the following principles:

(a) people with disability should be involved in decision making processes that affect them, and where possible make decisions for themselves;

(b) people with disability should be encouraged to engage in the life of the community;

(c) the judgements and decisions that people with disability would have made for themselves should be taken into account;

(d) the cultural and linguistic circumstances, and the gender, of people with disability should be taken into account;

(e) the supportive relationships, friendships and connections with others of people with disability should be recognised;

(f) if the person with disability is a child—the best interests of the child are paramount, and full consideration should be given to the need to:

(i) protect the child from harm; and

(ii) promote the child's development; and

(iii) strengthen, preserve and promote positive relationships between the child and the child's parents, family members and other people who are significant in the life of the child.

Source:

National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013

<http://www.disabilitycareaustralia.gov.au/document/151>



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