



FUNCTIONAL IMPACT OF PSYCHOSOCIAL DISABILITY

NDIS Assessment Resource

This resource has been developed by the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District NDIS Mental Health Working Group in 2018. It provides additional information to assist consumers and clinicians applying collaboratively for NDIS eligibility.

Goals should be collaborative and written in a “functional impact enabling participation frame” rather than within a “clinical frame”. This resource uses the term “when unwell”, although highly relevant to this population it does not necessarily demonstrate “maintenance of disability”. The meaning of “when unwell” in this context is in regard to fluctuations and changes in mental health and the associated impairment that accompany these changes.

Impairments can be episodic, vary in intensity and often seriously impact on a person’s ability with everyday living. This resource will assist consumers and clinicians to describe experiences of living with a mental health condition and how it affects daily life (impairment), how long they have been living with it and how they cope.

This content contains information on Mobility, Communication, Social Interaction, Learning, Self-management (Area of Need) and Self-care.

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Mobility	Assessing Psychosocial Disability	Functional Impacts	Example of Goals	Supports for Consideration
	Are there times when you're unable to get out of bed? How often does this occur?	I can't participate in any self-care, leisure, social or productive roles without assistance due to my mobility needs/mental health issues (e.g. a-motivation)	I want to be able to get out of bed in the morning as independently as possible, either with support from a person/people or assistive technology.	Occupational Therapy/Physiotherapy assessment & maintenance treatment (advice re assistive technology)
	Can you physically go to the shops to buy essentials items? Do you rely on walking aids (e.g. walking stick) or any other assistance to do this?	I am unable to leave the house due to physical/mental health related health issues.	I want to be able to leave the house whenever I want to.	Assistance accessing GP and support to attend physical health programs.
	Are you able to access transport independently to attend support groups, go shopping and/or attend appointments without support? Are you able to use public transport independently?	I find it hard to leave the house because of my anxiety /agoraphobia. I am unable to leave the house due to apathy, lack of motivation, poor planning and due to being self-conscious of to my mental health condition. This cycle leads to social isolation and further mental health deterioration.	I want to be able to visit my family, friends and attend social functions independently. I want to be able to catch public transport independently.	Appropriately trained professionals who are able to understand my needs and provide travel training including development of skills and coaching to assist in independent travel.
	Do you reside / live in accommodation that is suitable?	I live in a flat with a lot of stairs and that is a barrier to my getting out to do my shopping.	I want to be able to go out whenever I want to without feeling overwhelmed.	Access to supported accommodation options. Advocacy to find more suitable ground level accommodation.

Communication	Assessing Psychosocial Disability	Functional Impacts	Example of Goals	Supports for Consideration
	What impact does self-harm, suicidal thoughts and psychosis have on your ability to communicate with others?	I have difficulty following conversations and interpreting information.	I want to be able to make my needs understood and participate in planning to meet this goal.	Occupational Therapy assessment for suggestions regarding assistive technology.
	What is the frequency of these behaviours and what is the impact of this?	I continue to isolate myself from friends and family and spend more time alone.	I would like to be able to monitor my mood and understand some of the stressors and triggers for behaviour.	Psychosocial support – worker to assist me to regularly attend a group and eventually find employment.
	What impact does your disability have on your memory, cognitive functioning and ability to make decisions and problem solve?	I have difficulty understanding directions and retaining information that is shared with me.	I would like to access professionals to source appropriate assessments to determine any cognitive deficits, and any potential treatment options available.	Assistance to interpret information in a way that is understandable.
	How do you communicate with people? Do you have difficulties developing and maintaining professional and personal relationships/boundaries?	I have difficulty talking to and relating to people when I am feeling unwell. This can sometimes have an effect on work and personal relationships.	I would like to be able to spend time with people without feeling overwhelmed/angry/frustrated and anxious.	Therapy to increase interpersonal skills, and learn to control emotions
	Do you have difficulties developing and maintaining professional and personal relationships/boundaries?	I have difficulty making sense/interpreting information/communication, following instructions and seeking out help or direction from strangers.	I would like to access support that considers strategies to ensure I keep my appointments.	Assistance and support managing disassociation and problem solving and decision making.
	Can you make your own decisions and problem solve?	I have challenges in social settings; initiating and responding to conversations.	I would like to reconnect with my family and for them to understand how my mental health impacts on me day to day.	Behavioural support.
	Can you attend appointments on your own?	I experience significant physiological symptoms when faced with anxiety which increases my feelings of isolation and worthlessness.	I would like to be able to make appointments and attend them without supervision or support.	Consideration of communication aids to overcome communication and relationship difficulties.

Social Interaction	Assessing Psychosocial Disability	Functional Impacts	Example of Goals	Supports for Consideration
	Can you form positive relationships? Can and how do you maintain these?	Poor engagement with family, friends and the community which leads to further isolation.	I want to be able to participate in family gatherings and other social engagements with my peers.	Provision of short term support to interact with others in the community.
	How does your family, friends and the community view your symptoms and behaviour?	Inability to maintain positive relationships.	I would like to have a better understanding of my mental health condition and how/why it is impacting on my engagement with family and the community.	Support plan to attend social functions and groups.
	What is the impact of this on you?	Difficulty making and keeping friends and relationships.	I want to develop and maintain a circle of friends whom I can trust.	Assistance initially to attend recreational or vocational activities.
	Does your mental illness isolate you from the community?	Difficulty coping with feelings and emotions.	I would like to feel like I am part of a group or a respected member of my community.	Support to attend a group – identifying a group to meet emotional needs.
	Does your mental illness stop you from fully participating and interacting within the community?	Poor understanding of family dynamics and limited relationship regulation.	I would like to develop a relationship with a service that I trust and that will have my best interest as their priority.	Behavioural support and social skills training
	Do you have the skills and capability to manage your illness?	Social withdrawal, difficulty responding to social situations.	I would like to be able to meet new people in social situations without feeling anxious and self-conscious.	Support to attend social activities until confident and established.
	Can you regulate your emotions? If not, how does this impact on your ability to positively interact within the community?	Fear of distrust of others, lack of confidence in social settings leading to social withdrawal and isolation	I would like to be less isolated and more engaged with either 1:1 social support or in a group setting.	One on one support to develop skills to assist in the development of relationships and connections.
	Are you able to use public transport?	Difficulty accessing services leads to further isolation and distress	I would like to be able to use public transport on my own without assistance.	Accompanying travel and assistance with timetables and travel apps for a period of time.

Learning	Assessing Psychosocial Disability	Functional Impacts	Example of Goals	Supports for Consideration
	Can you understand and remember information?	<p>The impact on the person to maintain relationships, attend appointments and communicate.</p> <p>The affect their illness has on their cognition including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concentration • Memory • Comprehension of information. 	<p>I want to learn new skills to assist me in finding a job – i.e. writing a resume, contacting job centres, learning interview technique, attending appropriate training within their area of interest.</p> <p>I would like transition support as I settle in with an employer to ensure I understand the role and am supported as a new employee.</p>	<p>Support and training for electronic device use.</p> <p>Transition support to learn and function within the community.</p>
	Does the medication you are taking for your mental illness affect your ability to understand and remember things?	<p>Limited understanding and insight into learning needs, including learning and applying new information and making informed decisions.</p>	<p>I would like to develop skills and knowledge to help me understand the effects of medication on my thinking.</p>	<p>Requires assistance to learn new skills to limit maladaptive skills in order to cope with life on a daily basis.</p>
	Does your mental illness affect the way you comprehend instructions? Are there certain types of instructions that are easier to understand and comprehend?	<p>Difficulty understanding and comprehending written and verbal instructions which can lead to exacerbation of mental health issues and symptoms.</p>	<p>I would like to have strategies for understanding and remembering instructions and discussions.</p>	<p>Guidance, support and coaching in relation to emotional regulation.</p>
	What impact does emotional dysregulation and disassociation have on your ability to learn new information/things and to practice new skills?	<p>Difficulty organising tasks and organising information can lead to frustration and withdrawal.</p>	<p>I want to be able to organise information, so it is understandable and makes sense to me.</p>	<p>Consider equipment to assist with learning and organising, coaching and guidance to support the use of new equipment (i.e. table, phone)</p>
	Are you able to self-learn or do you need assistance? What are your coping skills? Do you have the coping skills to change behaviours (i.e. self-harm)?	<p>Increased anxiety and agitation when learning new information</p>	<p>I would like to have the skill to understand my behaviour and to know the triggers and how to deal with them.</p>	<p>Provide guidance, supervision and prompting with learning needs cognitive skills – planning, memory, learning new information, concentration, and supporting identified coping skills.</p>

Self-management (Area of Need)	Assessing Psychosocial Disability	Functional Impacts	Example of Goals	Supports for Consideration
	Are you able to manage your emotions, if not, what are the resulting behaviours?	When unwell the person often requires help with decision making and problem solving.	I want to be independent in making safe decisions.	Assistance maintaining home based responsibilities depending on need and ability.
	When unwell, can you keep yourself safe? Can you identify what being safe means?	Increased support and supervision is required when negotiating overwhelming situations such as managing finances.	I would like to access a financial counsellor for support with setting up and managing a budget.	Supervision with care of the house, financial management and engaging with service providers.
	Are you able to make decisions, particularly when you are emotionally overwhelmed or unwell – how does that affect your decision making?	Continuously financially disadvantaged, inability to save, increased impulsivity related to spending, impact on budgeting and other activities.	I would like support with future planning should I be in a position where I cannot make my own decisions.	Assistance with planning and developing strategies to maintain safety and wellbeing.
	Are your decisions helpful or do they involve taking overt risks and impulsive decisions?	Impulsive behaviours can result in negative experiences and consequences including loss of finances and relationships.	I would like a support worker to discuss options and decisions I am making in relation to finances.	Referral to legal services for future planning, power of attorney, guardianship orders, etc.
	Does this decision-making result in severe consequences and social disadvantage?	Exclusion from friends and family.	I would like a support worker to assist me to communicate with family and friends.	Supports with role modelling and guidance to maintain and enhance relationships.
	Do you maintain your finances and what is the financial impact of your illness?	Severe mood swings can result in excessive spending, making impulsive decisions, inability to make decisions and lack of motivation to complete tasks/activities.	I want support on how to manage finances more independently and learn to manage my own finances, particularly when I am unwell.	Supports with financial management, planning for episodes of increased distress and mental illness, and supervision.

	Assessing Psychosocial Disability	Functional Impacts	Example of Goals	Supports for Consideration
Self-care	When you are well, what do you need? When you are unwell, what do you need? Can you identify this?	Difficulties attending to self-care including – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showering and bathing • Dressing • Toileting • Maintaining physical health • Managing medication • Physical, emotional and mental health • Motivation • Nutrition 	I want to be able to look after my personal appearance, keep my home clean and tidy, shop for food and cook and to have some form of physical exercise every day.	Support, coaching and guidance to develop skills. One on one supervision and support to assist when needed.
	When you are unwell, how do you shower, eat and care for your own health and personal hygiene?	When unwell, the person often requires prompting to prepare meals, eating and drinking, and maintaining personal hygiene.	When I am unwell I want to know there is someone who will provide supervision, assistance and prompting with meals and shopping.	Support to provide supervision and assistance with shopping and meal preparation.
	What restricts you from doing these things when you are unwell?	Social isolation, conflict with family and friends, and a lack of motivation.	I do not want to become housebound and isolated when I am feeling unwell.	Supervision and support to leave the house. Assistance with accessing healthy lifestyle programs. Assistance to use public transport and travel
	How does this manifest when you are unwell?	Medication side effects leads to weight gain, physical health issues, increased appetite and lethargy resulting in difficulty with aspects of self-care.	I want to understand the side effects of medication and how they impact on my mental and physical wellbeing.	Support to plan and identify the behaviours associated with a deterioration in mental health. Education and one on one assistance with aspects of self-care.
	What does it look like? What are the impacts on your quality of life?	Feelings of lethargy and worthlessness, social withdrawal and isolation, and not actively participating in things of interest.	I want someone to help me monitor my mood and to provide increased assistance and support when I need it.	Psychosocial support that is flexible and responsive to need.

Bibliography

Aftercare. (2017). *Providing Evidence of Psychosocial Disability* [Brochure]. Australia: Aftercare.
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