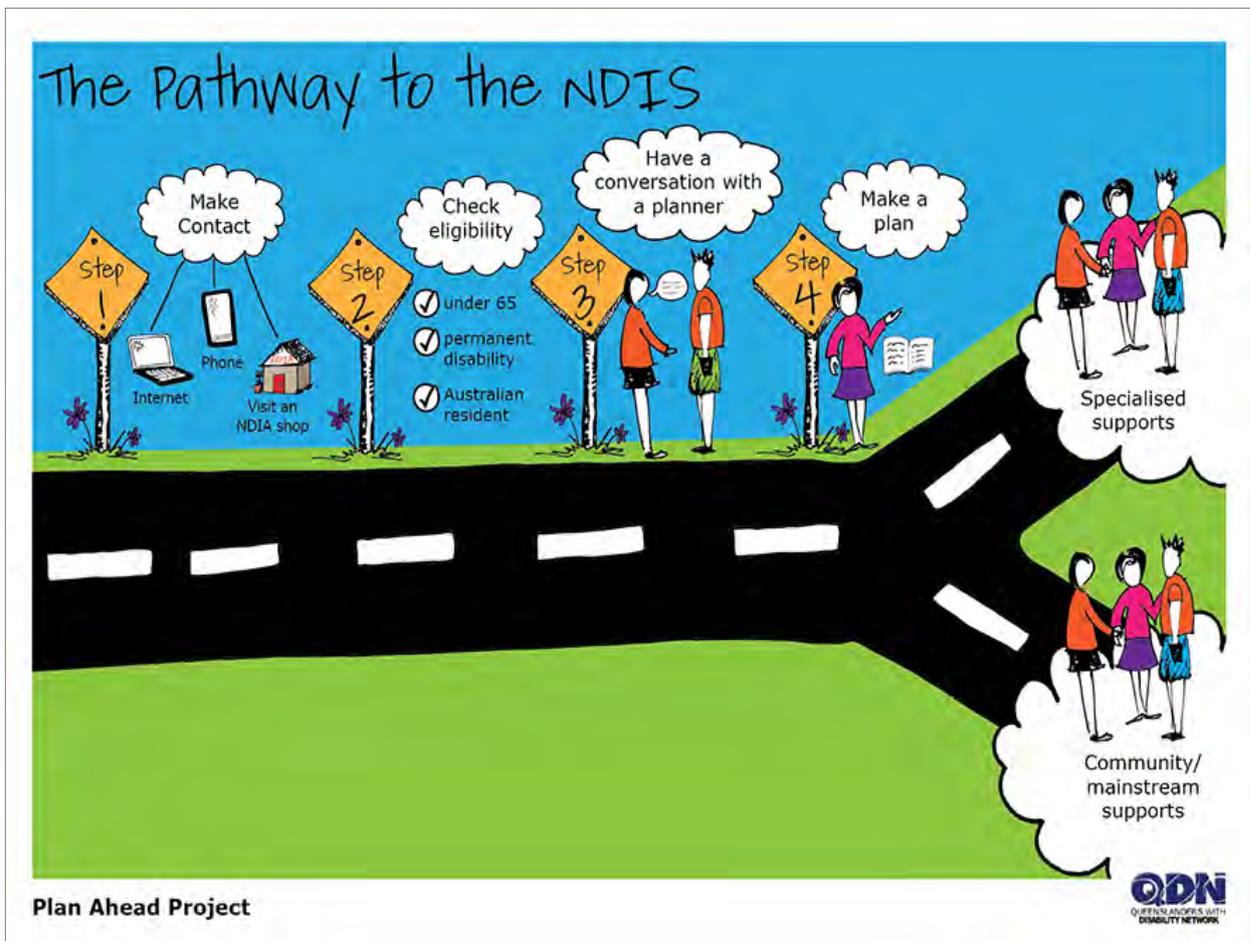


## Planning Ahead for the NDIS

A guide for organisations and families/carers to support people with intellectual disability to prepare for the NDIS



# Acknowledgements

Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN) would like to thank and acknowledge the work and contribution of the project team. Its members co-designed the peer education workshop for and by people with intellectual disabilities.

- Alex Baker
- Dan Rivers
- Daniel Rowe
- Donna Best
- Judy Richardson
- Kane Wojcicki
- Karin Swift
- Peter Tully
- Sam Matheson

QDN would also like to thank and acknowledge the support, advice and contribution of the project's advisory group:

- Jane Geltch – State Manager, National Disability Services Queensland
- Fiona Anderson – NDIS State Campaign Coordinator Queensland
- Kathy Ellem – Lecturer, School of Public Health and Social Work, Queensland University of Technology
- Morrie O'Connor – President, Queensland Branch ASID- full title
- Glenys Carlson - A/Principal Program Officer, Disability Planning and Purchasing, Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services

QDN would also like to acknowledge the work of the project team that has led and co-designed the program for peer co-facilitators, and the workshop content and resources:

- Michelle Moss – Project Lead Contractor
- Valmae Rose – Project Contractor
- Jen Barrkman – Project Contractor
- Paige Armstrong – QDN Chief Executive Officer
- Mark Edmonds – QDN Network Facilitator
- Hannah Murphy – Graphic Designer

QDN also acknowledges the funding support of the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services for this project.

## About Queenslanders with Disability Network

QDN has been established, as a state-wide network of, for, and with people with disability, for over ten years. The network regularly brings members together to campaign on issues that affect their lives. From such gatherings, and through input from Local Area Networks, QDN members determine the focus of the network and activities it undertakes.

QDN believes all people with disability have a right to live as empowered, valued citizens in their community with genuine opportunities to contribute and actively participate in all aspects of community life.

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## 1. About Plan Ahead

“Plan Ahead” is an initiative of Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN). The program has been delivered in 3 locations in South East Queensland to approximately 180 people with intellectual disability in May and June 2014.

The Plan Ahead project has two purposes:

1. To develop the capacity and skills of people with disability, including intellectual disability to be peer leaders, facilitators and mentors amongst their communities specifically with regards to the implementation of the NDIS.
2. Increase the awareness, knowledge and confidence of people with intellectual disability to explore and navigate the NDIS.

It is underpinned by the intrinsic belief that all people with intellectual disability have some capacity to make choices and exercise control in relation to aspects of their life. The co-facilitators and support facilitators demonstrate this belief in their strengths-based, respectful approach to each other and workshop participants.

The Project was overseen by QDN’s Board of Directors and its CEO, and a Strategic Advisory Group comprised of subject matter experts was formed to support and advise the work of the project.

It uses the model of peer facilitation with a group of 10 people with disability who led and facilitated the 3 part workshop series. The workshops, resources and information were co-designed by project team and peer co-facilitators, using strong imagery, and interactive learning opportunities tailored to meet the needs of people with cognitive and intellectual disability.

## 2. About this workbook

This workbook provides workers in the disability sector, and families/carers with information about the resources, tools and processes used in Plan Ahead.

The workbook provides information about:

1. **Peer facilitation** – what is it, and how it can be used as an approach by disability organisations as a way of empowering people with disability to take on role of peer mentors, educators and leaders to support preparedness for National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).
2. **Plan Ahead Workshops** – resources and tools and processes developed as part of the project that can be used by workers, families or carers to support people with intellectual disability in their preparation for the NDIS and the planning conversation.

### 3. Working with people with intellectual disability

Data and research to date indicate that people with intellectual and cognitive disability will constitute a high proportion of NDIS participants. The needs and experiences of this group are wide and far reaching, and it is essential that in supporting participant readiness for the scheme this group of people are given every opportunity to learn and develop skills and confidence to successfully navigate the system to the best of their ability.

For centuries, people with intellectual disability have been assumed to have limited or no capacity to learn, grow and develop. Such stereotyping has limited people's opportunities and reinforced their disempowerment over all aspects of their own lives.

Conversely, NDIS central principles are based upon choice and control. As such, to shift from a place of no power over the basic parts of your life, to a place of true choice and control will be a challenging journey for many people. To be in a place where you are given the right to make decisions and have input into what matters to you, and that it will be listened to, may be 'foreign territory' and very challenging for people.

In the first report of the National Disability Insurance Agency – Quarterly Report to COAG Disability Reform Council 31 December 2013, the data in table 1.1.1 Information about participants (total active participants split by gender, age and primary disability) identifies that 67% of participants across the 5 trial sites have intellectual/learning disability as their primary disability.

It is essential that we give people information in a way that they can understand and process, and an opportunity to build their inter-personal, communication and negotiation skills and capacity to enable them to realise the true intent and principles of the NDIS. This will enable them to truly self-direct the support they need related to their disability.

The project responds to these systemic issues and to issues identified by QDN through engagement with its consumer members and supporters, people with a disability and families/carers and support organisations and through the work of the Community Enablers Program.

These issues include the need for people with intellectual disability to:

- Gain a better understanding of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and what it means for their life.
- Develop their capacity to navigate the new system, and prepare for planning meetings, assessment processes and engagement with the National Disability Insurance Agency (the Agency).

QDN felt that it was important to begin this journey towards the NDIS with a dedicated focus upon disability groups "who may get left behind", or become excluded from the conversation, because they lack resources and tools developed and designed to meet the content and format accessible to their needs.

This project responds to the need of NDIS potential participants with intellectual disability to access information about the NDIS and build their awareness, willingness to explore and confidence to engage with the NDIS.

## 4. About Peer Facilitation

QDN chose the model of peer facilitation for this project based upon the belief in this powerful way to support people's learning, growth and confidence, as well as establishing strong networks of people who can share and learn from each other's experiences.

This section outlines information about peer facilitation and its benefits, and how you might go about establishing peer facilitators in your own organisation and recruiting and developing them in this role

### What is peer facilitation?

Peer facilitation is the process of peer education, whereby trained people with disability undertake capacity building workshops with other people with disability. The aim of peer facilitation in this context is to provide an opportunity for people to come together as peers to:

1. Develop people's awareness and understanding of the NDIS.
2. To increase their capacity and skills to be empowered and exercise more choice and control.

### Why peer facilitation?

Peer support, peer education, peer mentoring and peer leadership are strong levers for change in regard to people with intellectual disability.

A peer facilitation and peer support model was chosen based upon the concepts that people with disability:

- have the life experience and knowledge to best support others in their learning about being empowered and having choice and control in their lives;
- are experts in their own lives, and can share their experiences and learnings with other people to direct their own lives; and
- can inspire others and serve as leaders and role models to support others to achieve their goals and dreams.

The process of peer facilitation and peer support often engages and connects with people who may be unwilling to listen to professionals, and also provides a credible source of information from people with lived experiences. Workshop participants can experience growth and development in confidence and skills, alongside the personal growth and development of the individuals who have taken on the role of peer co-facilitator.

This approach also provides an opportunity for linking within local communities, to build networks and relationships amongst peers, and provide 'on the ground' information about what assets exist in local communities.

#### Notes...

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## What is the role of a peer co-facilitator?

In undertaking this work of participant readiness for people with intellectual disability, peer facilitators take on multiple roles. These include:

- Educator
- Mentor
- Supporter and linker
- Leader

In the Plan Ahead Project, peer co-facilitators fulfilled these roles through the following activities:

- Educator – to co-design workshops and processes, and to transfer and support people’s learning about the NDIS and key concepts.
- Mentor – to develop and encourage people’s growth and development and open windows in people’s thinking about their life and what is possible.
- Supporter and linker – within local community and strengthening peer networks.
- Leader – step forward as emerging leader in their community and peer networks.

## Deciding if peer facilitation is the right approach for your organisation

In beginning to undertake work within your organisation, it is important to think about how and if peer facilitation could be used as an approach to build capacity and knowledge of the people with intellectual disability within your organisation.

It is recognised that this approach relies on peer co-facilitators having communication skills that enable them to work with groups of people. However, based upon our experience emerging leaders are everywhere, and through a strong training and development program that builds upon people’s strengths and abilities, and a model that gives people the supports they need, in the way and when they need it, many people who don’t believe they could do something like this, can and do an outstanding job.

This work of using peer facilitation to help people with intellectual disability get ready for the NDIS can be undertaken on both small and large scales, in informal and formal structured environments, with a few people through to larger groups.

In considering this in your organisation, the following are some key areas to think about:

- Is there someone in the organisation has the belief and passion to support and lead this work?
- Is there a commitment from the different levels of governance and management to support this work?
- Where are there emerging peer leaders within our organisation and who are they?
- What financial and human resources do we have to support this?
- How does this fit with our organisational readiness plan for NDIS transition?
- If not peer facilitation as the approach, how can we build peer mentors and communities of peers to support, share knowledge and skills and help each other be well positioned to get the best they can from the new system?

## Recruiting peer facilitators

In beginning to look at who might be willing to take on the role of peer co-facilitator, and have some appropriate skills and attributes to this work, an approach that QDN used was to identify people who were currently taking on this role in their local communities, and emerging leaders of people with intellectual disability who had participated in previous NDIS related projects in a similar role.

The peer co-facilitators for Plan Ahead were recruited on the following key areas:

- member of the QDN Network;
- lived experience of disability;
- level of literacy to be able to read some words and/or symbols;
- experience or interest of working with groups of people;
- enjoy working with other people;
- enjoy speaking in front of a group of people;
- know when and how to share their own personal experiences and stories;
- know about the NDIS or willingness to learn;
- live in the local area;
- contribute to workshop design about NDIS and planning for a good life; and
- skills and ability to support peer's learning through education and mentoring.

It was also important for peer co-facilitators to:

- show a commitment to communicating the NDIS as an opportunity for people with disability and their families;
- support an approach that aimed to:
  - help open windows for people's thinking about their life;
  - talk to people's hope and optimism about the future; and
  - put our best foot forward and help people see the opportunities that the NDIS may bring for them.
- acknowledge that people with disabilities may have had negative experiences and to be there to support them to have hope for their future; and
- not take on the role of an individual support worker or advocate, or a planner like staff from the National Disability Insurance Agency or an organisation who sits down with individuals and their families to develop a "plan for a good life".

### Notes...

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## The Plan Ahead model of peer co-facilitation

Peer co-facilitation model used in this project consists of a team of three people for each location. The 'team' includes a:

- facilitator drawn from QDN's Network of Facilitators - people with disability with strong connections to their local community;
- co-facilitator who has an intellectual disability; and
- supports facilitator who is part of the project team of QDN employees or contractors.

The two co-facilitators have the role of facilitating the workshops, and the supports facilitator is there to provide whatever support is required throughout the workshop. This may involve saying prompting questions to help the co-facilitator communicate the content information, supporting the person to lead a group discussion, helping keep the workshop flowing, responding to tricky questions, or challenging situations. It is important that the supports facilitator takes on an unobtrusive role that is enabling and empowering.

## Principles for working together

The group collectively agreed upon key principles to underpin and inform all work. They include:

- commitment to doing this work together;
- commitment to working in mutually respectful ways;
- alignment and commitment to communicating the positive opportunities for people with disability for their future under a NDIS;
- commitment to project co-design and input into project;
- acknowledging a diversity of views and perspectives but commitment to working together collaboratively; and
- alignment to mission and value base of QDN – what do we mean?

### Notes...

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## 5. Training people with intellectual disability – peer facilitation

The project team made a deliberate choice to use strong and connected imagery throughout the project, to strengthen connection to concepts and information about the NDIS.

The imagery is based upon the notion of a journey towards the NDIS, and that we are the beginning stage of starting to pack for this journey. Roads, sign posts, suitcases, maps, landscapes, nature have all been used as part of the visual supports to tell the story and bring to life the core concepts of the NDIS.

In undertaking the training, parallel processes of co-designing and developing the workshops that would be delivered, and training the co-facilitators to deliver these workshops.

To achieve this, a series of 6 days of training for co-facilitators was held to build:

- capacity and skills in workshop presentation and group facilitation;
- group cohesion and effective working relationships between each area team; and
- content knowledge about NDIS and workshop content areas.

The approach to this work included:

- recognising the strengths and abilities of each individual co-facilitator;
- working with each person where they are at, acknowledging any fears or challenges they identified and building upon their existing abilities and skills;
- a concept of co-design to ensure everyone had ownership and engagement in the project, and to ensure that the deliverables met the needs of the individual workshop participants; and
- flexibility to meet the learning styles and needs of the wide spectrum of the group.

The peer facilitation training involved four core areas. This included:

- **Peer to peer skills** in communication, empathy and relationship building.
- **Content knowledge** – developing content knowledge about the NDIS, choice and control, and life domains.
- **Group and co-facilitator cohesiveness** – to ensure that area teams and co-facilitators worked effectively together.
- **Group facilitation and education skills** –to develop skills in facilitating and supporting group process, dynamics and learning.

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The project team designed a 6 day training program for peer co-facilitators, and used a model that would be reflected in the design of the three Plan Ahead workshops. The model was based upon a flow which included the following components: Check-in and alignment

- Explore (content)
- Reflect (content)
- Practice (processes and workshop facilitation)
- Check-out

Over the series of the 6 days of training for peer co-facilitators, the following areas were covered:

- Working together
- Getting to know each other
- The project
- Our roles and responsibilities
- Working with groups
- Responding to challenging questions
- Communicating and speaking in front of a crowd

The weekly meetings provided an opportunity to work with the group to:

- Build confidence and self-esteem
- Build skills and capacity
- Build relationships and effective working partnerships

## Tools and processes used as part of training

### Circle

Each training workshop was held in a circle to reflect the project's core principle of working together and recognising the value and contribution of each member of the group.

Meetings followed a process of check-in and check-out using a variety of techniques, to support the group to be focused on being present during the day, and being able to return home/back to work in a clear frame of mind.

### Theatre/drama

Theatre/drama was used as a key mechanism throughout. Jen Barrkman from Red Thread Stories led this part of the process and used a variety of activities to teach and model processes to incorporate into the format of the Plan Ahead workshops format and the suite of tools to be able to be used.

Some key group processes included:

- Mirror movements in pairs to reinforce.
- Name game with a rhythmic clapping sequence used to refocus and energise the group.
- Whoosh as a process for re-energising the group at the beginning and finish of each section of a meeting or activity.

## Drawing

Drawing was used continually throughout the training workshops as a way of reinforcing learning and a medium that was accessible to the whole group. It was a powerful tool that also helped build relationships, self-esteem and confidence, and became part of the 'legend' of each of the sessions and used to build a narrative around the concepts.

## Building content knowledge about the NDIS

Throughout the project, a variety of mechanisms were used to build and increase the group's content knowledge about the NDIS.

Project contractors hosted conversations to provide content and to help distil and process key concepts of the NDIS including:

1. Purpose
2. Pathway
3. Planning conversation
4. Life domains
5. Choice and Control

It was important for peer co-facilitators to be clear about the purpose of the workshops and that they were there to help people with intellectual disability:

- begin to know about the NDIS;
- to be prepared for the NDIS;
- to start to think ahead so they can know what to expect; and
- to know what the system looks like and how they can best navigate that system.

An essential part of the alignment of peer co-facilitators and the project team was to enable everyone to work from the same starting point, and communicating the same messages and intent.

## Resources for peer co-facilitators

A number of different resources were developed for peer co-facilitators to support their learning, and to act as tools for the delivery of the workshops.

This includes:

1. Resource book including:
  - workshop flow;
  - purpose of each section;
  - tips for facilitating groups; and
  - a suite of activities to use with groups.
2. Facilitators' notes for each workshop.

The following provides an example of the resources used in the facilitator's guide. Symbols and words are used throughout as cues to support the different literacy skills of members of the group and ensure that the resource is accessible to all the co-facilitators.

1.		Welcome
2.		Check-in and connecting
3.		Recap on last session's learning
4.		New information
BREAK		
5.		Reflect on new learnings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Draw</li> <li>- Role plays</li> <li>- Quiet time</li> <li>- talking</li> </ul>
6.		Practice
7.		Check-out

The following information was provided to the peer co-facilitators to give them the framework and flow for the workshops and align to what we were aiming to achieve within each section.

The following is an excerpt from the **Facilitator's Training Guide**:



### 1. Welcome

This is the beginning of the workshop and a time to welcome people and give information about what to expect.

At the end of this section we want to help people:

- Feel welcomed
- Understand what they are going to do in the workshop
- Know the ground rules for working together
- Know where the toilets are, when breaks happen, and what to do if people have
- Questions about other stuff that isn't the NDIS



### 2. Check-in and getting connected

This is the time for getting people to 'check-in' with the group and get connected with each other.

At the end of this section we want to help people:

- Get to know each other
- Feel more confident to talk with each other in groups



### 3. Recap on last session's learning

This section is to go over the information from the last session.

At the end of this section we want to help people:

- Remember what we talked about at the last workshop
- Check people's learning about the key messages



#### 4. New Information

This section is to cover new information and content. At each workshop this will cover different topics that will be the focus on the workshop.

For each workshop, at the end of this section we want to help people:

##### Workshop 1:

- Know about the NDIS
- The purpose of the NDIS
- The pathways and steps to follow
- Bust some of the myths

##### Workshop 2:

- Know about the 5 key life domain area
- The planning conversation and the things that will be talked about
- Mapping their own life areas

##### Workshop 3:

- Think about their dreams and goals
- Know about choice and control



#### 5. Reflection

This section is to help people think about and remember what they have learnt.

At the end of this section we want to help people:

- Remember what they have learnt
- Be able to tell other people the information
- Think about how or what it could apply to them

We will use a lot of different ways to help people reflect and remember:

- Draw
- Talk about it
- Role plays
- Quite time

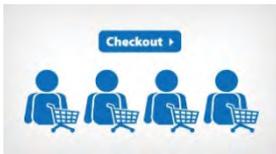


## 6. Practice

This section is to get people to practice what they have learnt.

Like in the reflection section, at the end of this section we want to help people:

- Remember what they have learnt
- Be able to tell other people the information
- Think about how or what parts of it could apply to them



## 7. Check-out

This section is to finish off the workshop.

At the end of this section we want to help people:

- Tell us about how they are feeling
- Tell us about what they have learnt

## Evaluation framework

An evaluation framework has been developed by Valmae Rose to track and report on changes in knowledge, confidence and general readiness to engage with the NDIS, over the course of the QDN Plan Ahead Training Program.

This is based upon a continuum of readiness which begins with basic awareness to willingness to explore and challenge, to confidence to engage with the new system. The evaluation is based upon self-reporting, peer reporting and/or observation focusing on both individual outcomes and broader impact.

The three key areas for this project were:

- Building awareness
- Exploring
- Building confidence

Key indicators for each area were developed to measure changes in participant knowledge, confidence and readiness. These included being able to recall or access core NDIS messages, through to people being aware there are options to be explored in relation to their own situation, through to people confident enough to engage with others around their own involvement with the NDIS.

## 6. The Plan Ahead Workshops

### Format and time

The Plan Ahead project was designed in the format of three workshops to provide an opportunity to build upon people's learning each week, enable participants to get to know each other and build their networks and develop relationships and provide ample time for the content to be delivered and chance to transfer knowledge in a way that works for the learning needs of the group. Each workshop was for 3 hours.

### The workshops

The titles, content and information about the three workshops are:



#### 1. Starting the journey

About the NDIS:

- Its purpose
- Pathways and steps

#### 2. Planning for the journey

Exploring life domains:

- 5 key areas to think about

#### 3. Packing for the journey

Getting ready for planning for NDIS:

- Dreams and goals
- Choice and control

Each workshop follows same flow/format:

1. Welcome
2. Check-in
3. Recap on last session's learning
4. New information – explore new content
5. Reflection
6. Practice
7. Conclusion



## 7. Workshop Resources

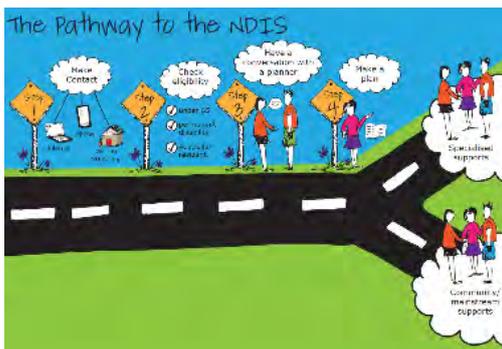
Plan Ahead project has used the imagery of a journey as a tool to enhance learnings and connections for participants.

A number of resources were developed which included:

- Road Map
- Planning conversation
- Life domains
- Map – where I am now
- Map – where I want to go
- Strengths passport

Any of the resources or activities can be used and adapted to meet the learning and literacy needs of individual participants.

### The Road Map



#### Purpose:

The Road Map gives the 4 key steps towards the NDIS in an easy to see and read way.

#### As a tool:

It is used as visual support and a reference point throughout the workshops. In the workshops it is used as a large poster, and also as a reference point for the drawing activity to help participants recall what they have learnt and discussed, and reinforce these 4 steps.

### Planning Conversation



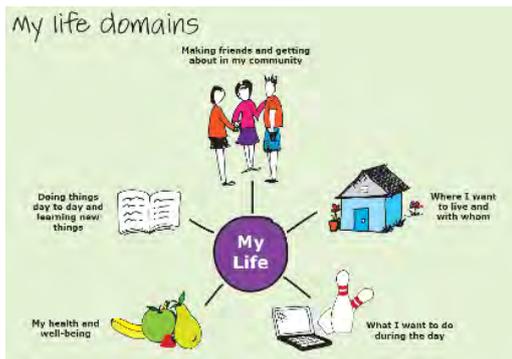
#### Purpose:

The planning conversation resource highlights the three key areas that a NDIS participant will talk about with their planner.

#### As a tool:

It is used as visual support and an activity to help people start to think about their goals and dreams, their strengths and abilities and the supports they will need to achieve this.

## Life Domains



### Purpose:

The life domains resource brings together the 10 domains that the planners are using to guide their conversations into five areas that people can relate to in their own life as a way of supporting learning and understanding.

### As a tool:

It is used as visual support and a reference point throughout the workshops, like the road map. It can also be adapted to be used as an activity to start mapping out key part of their own life.

## Map-where am I now



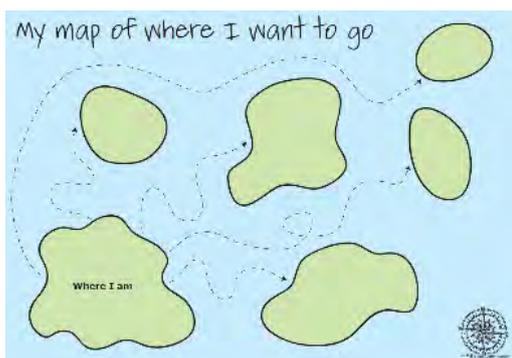
### Purpose:

The where am I now map is to help support people to think about where they are now across the life domains to help start unlocking people's thinking and dreaming about their dreams and goals.

### As a tool:

It is used as an activity to help people start to explore 'their own territory' and where they are now, and can be used to think about one to all of the five life domain areas.

## Map-where I want to go



### Purpose:

The where I want to go map is to help support people to think about their goals and dreams and where they want to go and where they want to be.

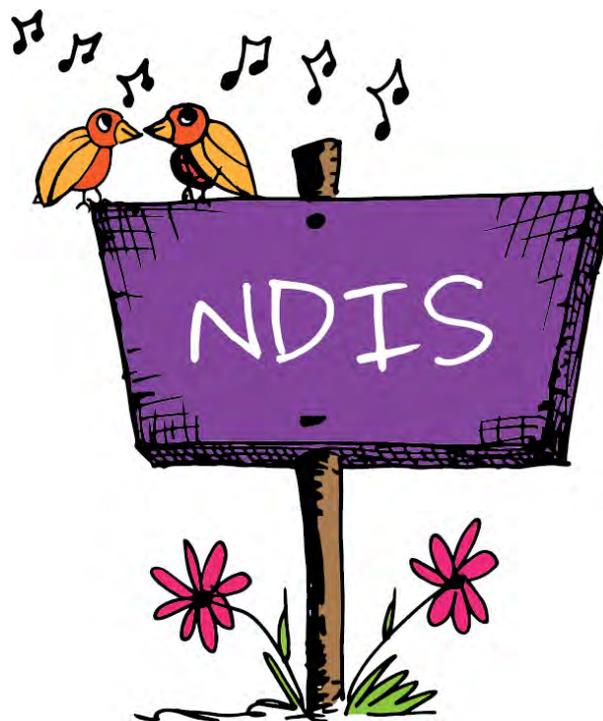
### As a tool:

It is used as an activity to help people start to explore their goals and dreams, building upon what they may have thought about in their map of "where I am now" and can be used to think about one to all of the five life domain areas.









For more information and resources, visit the Sector Readiness and Workforce Capacity Initiative Clearinghouse: <http://Communitydoor.org.au/SectorReadiness>

The Sector Readiness and Workforce Capacity Initiative is a collaboration between the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, Health and Community Services Workforce Council, National Disability Services Queensland and the Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE.

This workbook has been developed by QDN in consultation with National Disability Services Queensland