

# TIPS: For Managing Access Challenges

## Step 4 - TIPS: For Managing Access Challenges

*Hear about barriers or challenges that some NDIS participants have faced with the NDIS:*

A transcript of this video is here: [Transcript-Barriers](#)

You may find you face challenges when trying to access the NDIS. And the NDIA is continuing to work to improve the NDIS based on these experiences and people's feedback.

**Here are some challenges that people with mental health conditions may experience with the NDIS, and tips to manage them:**

**I do not understand what the NDIS is, or how it can help me.**

Read this website, the workbook and try the activities. Talk to a friend, family member, worker or peer about what you are learning. Join a group, e.g. on Facebook, where people talk about their experiences of the NDIS, so that you can share and learn from others.

**I believe or have been told that I will not be eligible.**

To avoid getting a decision of 'not eligible' it is important to prepare as much information as possible before you submit your access request.

Some things to remember:

- Take time to think about the supports you need so you can explain it in your access request. You can use the reimagine.today workbook to help you!
- Have clear hopes and goals to work towards
- Ask someone to support you to apply, or be your advocate
- Speak up – ask questions and share your views and concerns – check out advice on the [Self-Care Hub](#).
- Gather all the necessary information before submitting your access request – use the reimagine.today workbook (or App) to keep your information in one place.

You may need evidence of:

- Frequent hospitalisation for your mental health
- Receiving mental health care and treatment from a GP, public mental health service, private psychiatrist or other health worker
- Little, if any, employment in recent years
- Poor physical health
- Insecure housing

- Extreme social isolation
- Little or no support from family or friends
- Recent diagnosis and treatment information.

**The NDIS Act does not require that you have a diagnosis** as the scheme is focussed on the functional impacts of your mental health on your life, not your diagnoses. However, proving eligibility for NDIS can be easier with diagnostic and treatment information. If you do not believe you have a mental health condition or have other reasons for preferring not to get mental health treatment, then consider discussing this with the NDIA or your Local Area Coordinator (LAC) when applying.

If you disagree with your eligibility decision you can ask the NDIA or others to review it. Check out the [Requesting a review of a decision](#) page.

## **What if I currently get support from a Commonwealth mental health program but don't apply?**

The Commonwealth mental health programs are Partners in Recovery, Personal Helpers and Mentors, the Day to Day Living Program and Mental Health Respite: Carer Support.

If you are/were receiving support from one of these programs, you will still get some ongoing support if you apply but are not eligible for the NDIS. If you choose not to apply for the NDIS, this may limit the amount of support available to you, and you may lose your 'Guarantee of Service'.

### **Guarantee of Service**

If you previously received a service under a mental health program, there is a 'Guarantee of Service' during NDIS transition. **This means you must get at least the same support as you were getting before.** It is important to speak with the NDIA, your Local Area Coordinator (LAC) or an advocate about this.

## **I'm feeling confused, anxious and stressed about the access process.**

Applying for the NDIS and the planning process is a lot of work. The NDIS is a new system of support, so it's unfamiliar. This can make the process confusing and stressful.

It is important to look after your health, wellbeing and keep up your self-care activities. If you have a wellbeing plan, you may wish to review this and perhaps do extra self-care tasks at this time. Check out the [Self-Care Hub](#) for additional strategies.

It can be helpful to talk to others who've been through the process, so ask people you know, check out if there is a group near you, or search for an online group, e.g. on Facebook.

The NDIA now do a 'My First Plan'. It can give you time to get to know the NDIA and then time to get to know you. This makes the wait time shorter for eligible people.

If 21 days have passed since you heard from the NDIA about your application or plan, contact them. Make a record of the day, time, who you spoke to and what they said. There is space in your [reimagine.today](#) workbook to record this.

## **I have not yet got a decision about my application.**

The NDIA try to make decisions within 21 days after you apply. Each time they ask for more information the 21 days starts again. This may happen several times.

You may need to be patient while the NDIA helps out a lot of people to get support. If 21 days have passed since you heard from anyone then contact the NDIA. Make a record of the contact.

You have the right to give feedback or make a complaint. There is more information about giving feedback and making complaints on this [page](#) or on [the NDIS website](#).

## **What if I am not eligible?**

Not all people will be eligible for, want or need NDIS funded supports or services. reimagine.today includes information about where people who are ineligible for the NDIS can go for care and support. Check out the [If I do not meet the access requirements. What can I do?](#) page.

If your needs or choices change, you might consider reapplying for the NDIS.

## **I'm finding this change overwhelming and wonder if it's worth it.**

The NDIS is the biggest social reform since the introduction of Medicare over 30 years ago. It will take some time for it to work well for people with mental health conditions. People with mental health conditions who access the NDIS will benefit from increased levels of support. Increased support aims to increase health and well-being, and this is why it's worth it!

People receiving state/territory funded disability support services may not have noticed their initial transition to the NDIS. Others, including Commonwealth mental health program clients and other people with mental health conditions, may find both applying for access and planning challenging.

If you feel that participating in the NDIS is not worth it, speak about this with someone you trust. There may be extra help for you to navigate the NDIS and other services. We encourage you to try and stay hopeful and optimistic about the NDIS and other mental health reforms.

## **I find it hard to speak with new people and to have differences of opinion with people.**

Interacting with people in power can be hard. This is especially true if others have treated you badly in the past. Examples of others treating you badly are bullying, harassment, abuse and neglect. It is NOT OK for these things to happen to you. If you are treated badly you might be fearful of speaking with people or be scared to have differences of opinion with people.

Remember, if you are:

- Applying to access the NDIS [there is support available](#)
- Eligible for NDIS supports, you could use your funds to develop skills and confidence, meet new people or resolve differences of opinion (sometimes called conflict resolution). Getting help means these activities are included in your plan
- Ineligible for the NDIS, it is important to try to stay hopeful about your recovery and [seek the help you need and want to support this](#).