

Mental health recovery, psychosocial disability and the NDIS

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Recovery is about achieving the best possible life with personal, social and emotional wellbeing, as defined by each individual living with a mental health condition. Recovery does not mean always living without symptoms of a mental health condition. Even people whose mental health symptoms are responsive to treatment can experience times when symptoms return. This can result in changes in mood, thoughts or ways of behaving that may be episodic. Not everyone who has a mental health condition will experience [psychosocial disability](#), but those that do can experience severe effects and social disadvantage. People with a significant disability, that is likely to be permanent, may qualify for NDIS funded support. The National Disability Insurance Agency understand that hope and optimism are important in recovery and are committed to making sure they are supported through the design and implementation of the NDIS. They also have a Mental Health Sector Reference Group that is working to strengthen the inclusion of people with psychosocial disability in the NDIS. You can read more about their work, and explore the reports and statistics, on the [NDIS Mental Health Sector Reference Group web page](#).

Permanent, lifelong and episodic

To be able to become an NDIS participant you need to experience psychosocial disability and your disability also needs to be able to be described as:

1. likely to be permanent
2. significantly affecting your ability to perform everyday tasks or participate in activities
3. likely to require support under the NDIS for your lifetime.

The level of intensity and support needed for a psychosocial disability may not always be the same during your lifetime. You may go through good periods and bad periods. If your mental health condition is episodic, but you have long term impacts that require support over your lifetime, you may still be able to access the NDIS.

The language of the NDIS and recovery

Having your mental health condition described as a “disability” that is “significant” and “likely to be permanent or lifelong” may not fit with your beliefs about recovery. However, it is important to remember these are terms that are required for accessing the NDIS; and the NDIS is there to help you choose the services and supports you need to live a meaningful and contributing life, which is consistent with recovery! To access this support you will need to use the language of the NDIS. Remember, the purpose of the NDIS is to provide you with choice and control. It aims to give you the opportunity to be more active and involved and focus on your strength. You can choose to take control and use these words to help you access the NDIS to support your recovery.

Useful links

[A national framework for recovery-oriented mental health services: Guide for practitioners and providers. Chapter 3 – Recovery the concept](#) [A national framework for recovery-oriented mental health services: Guide for practitioners and providers](#) [Fact sheet: Psychosocial Disability, recovery and the NDIS](#)

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