



Fact Sheet D – Comparison Fact Sheet – Consumer (Participant) and Carer Engagement

Consumer/Participant and Carer Engagement is an important theme in both the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Practice Standards (NDIS PS)* and the *National Standards for Mental Health Services (NSMHS)*. Engagement by NDIS providers with consumers/participants and carers will take place largely at 2 levels:

- with individuals; and
- within the communities surrounding those individuals.

Consumers (participants)

The National Disability Insurance Agency’s (NDIA) statutory functions are set out in section 118 of the National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (NDIS Act). One of the statutory functions is:

- *delivering the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) so as to, amongst other things, support the independence, and social and economic participation, of people with disability and enable people with disability to exercise choice and control in the pursuit of their goals and the planning and delivery of their supports.*

It is therefore not surprising that all 22 Outcomes in the NDIS PS Core Module are framed around individual participants, with respect to their rights and responsibilities, the provider governance and operational management and the provision of supports. For certification against the NDIS PS, there are numerous requirements for evidence that providers will need to demonstrate their consideration of, and their engagement with, each participant.

By contrast, with respect to community engagement, there is only one requirement in the NDIS PS Core Module for providers to demonstrate engagement with participant communities. This requirement is detailed in the table below.

NDIS PS Core Module 2: Provider Governance and Operational Management

Indicator	Description	Requirement to demonstrate compliance
2.1 1	Opportunities are provided by the governing body for people with disability to contribute to the governance of the organisation and have input into the development of organisational policy and processes relevant to the provision of supports and the protection of participant rights.	Policy - governance (consumer and community engagement, input in policy development).

There will be a number of organisations that have either registered, or are considering registering, for NDIS certification that are accredited against the NSMHS. It is important to note that the key principles of the NSMHS include:

- Mental health services should promote an optimal quality of life for people with mental health problems and/or mental illness.
- Services are delivered with the aim of facilitating sustained recovery.
- Consumers should be involved in all decisions regarding their treatment and care, and as far as possible, the opportunity to choose their treatment and setting.
- Consumers have the right to have their nominated carer(s) involved in all aspects of their care.
- The role played by carers, as well as their capacity, needs and requirements as separate from those of consumers is recognised.
- Participation by consumers and carers is integral to the development, planning, delivery and evaluation of mental health services.
- Mental health treatment, care and support should be tailored to meet the specific needs of the individual consumer.
- Mental health service consumers being involved in their care is fundamental to the recovery approach.
- Mental health treatment and support should impose the least personal restriction on the rights and choices of consumers taking account of their living situation, level of support within the community and the needs of their carer(s).

Whilst there are some differences between these principles and those of the NDIS, there are also important similarities. Accordingly, providers seeking to meet the certification requirements of the NDIS PS should be able to use much of what they have in place for the accreditation requirements of the NSMHS. There may need to be some modifications to NSMHS-specific evidence for it to meet the requirements of the NDIS PS however, overall the fit should be good, particularly if the focus of NDIS providers is participants with psychosocial disability.

Carers

Though the NDIS recognises the important role of carers (family, guardian and friends) in establishing, managing, monitoring and, in some cases, delivering supports and advocating for participants, the NDIS PS and associated Rules and other documents have few requirements for providers to engage with carers, other than if they are a nominated carer. The NDIS provides a range of guidance and advice to support carers which can be found at:

- www.ndis.gov.au/understanding/families-and-carers
- www.ndis.gov.au/understanding/families-and-carers/support-carers-other-agencies

This contrasts markedly with the NSMHS, in which carers are prominent in the key principles and for accreditation, for which there are many requirements for organisations to demonstrate effective engagement with carers (at individual and community level). Accordingly, NDIS providers that are accredited against the NSMHS and want to ensure they maintain quality engagement with carers for NDIS purposes should be able to use much of what they have in place for NSMHS (such as Standards 3 and 7).

Consumer (participant) and Carer Engagement Framework

Whilst there is no requirement for NDIS providers to do so, they are encouraged to consider developing and implementing a Consumer (Participant) and Carer Engagement Framework, that is proportionate to the size, scale, scope and complexity of services/supports being delivered. Additional resources include:

- WA Mental Health Commission - Working Together – Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drug Engagement Framework 2018-2025 and Working Together Toolkit: www.mhc.wa.gov.au/about-us/consumer-family-and-carer-participation/statewide-engagement-framework-and-toolkit/
- People with Disabilities Western Australia Training Toolkit: www.pwdwa.org/our_campaigns/connect_with_me.html