

**ASSISTANCE WITH PLANNING.
AND INDIVIDUALISED SUPPORT PACKAGES
by the Department of Human Services, Victoria**

*This state government department loves to tell how it should be,
but not how it is!*

Principles outlined in the Disability Act 2006 states:-

- Planning should be individualised,
- Directed by the person where possible
- Consider and respect the role of the family
- Strengthen and build families to support children with a disability
- Support communities to respond to the individual goals and needs of people with a disability
- Flexible responses to those goals and needs
- Maximize the choice and independence of a person with a disability
- Flexible responses to those goals and needs

The Disability Act 2006 aims to strengthen and acknowledge the role of family and that services will be responsive to the needs of a person with a disability

The Guiding principles for Planning are:-

- Individualised
- Be directed by the person with a disability where possible

Planning is now seen as the key mechanism for people, at various life stages such as childhood, adolescence, adulthood and ageing to identify their goals and aspirations.

For each person the planning will have a different focus. People are different, therefore, different likes, dislikes. The planning process must consider the family, social network's, the person's abilities all will impact upon a planning process and its facilitation.

Planning is not just about disability supports, as the Disability Act states it is about people with disability participating in our community. (and for some they need assistance to achieve this)

If we reflect upon our own community we would be able to identify supports and services being provide to people with a disability and within that community these services have the potential to enrich our community in many ways'.

Individualised Planning is about:-

Wherever possible the person with a disability making their own choices, for some this may be independent, for others it will be with the support of family.

Planning also acknowledges and respects the view of 'family members and the role family plays in supporting their disabled family member.

Planning must also be sensitive to cultural and spiritual differences

ASSISTANCE WITH PLANNING.. What does this mean?

It can be considered for people with a disability who are seeking support for the first time:-

Assistance with planning can assist in developing a vision for the future and identify the steps along the way. Assistance with planning could also be considered when there is some life changes.

The planning process and the documentation of the plan will be different for everyone, as previously mentioned people are different.

Ideally assistance with planning is not undertaken when a person or their family is in crisis.

Disability Client Services can provide assistance with planning, case management can also have a function of planning and facilitation.

In time other disability funded services may broaden out their service type to include a planning and facilitation function.

WHAT DOES PLANNING INVOLVE?

It involves an exploration unpacking of what is important to the person, their goals, short and long term, acknowledging their family, friends, carers, social networks and the roles they play in the person's life. Planning can identify "what do I really enjoy and what do I dislike" what do I want to be doing in 12 months or 5 years," again this may be with support of family

Ideally a Plan must consider the elements of:-

- Who is the person - This is who I am
- What is important to them
- What do I/they like and dislike

From here the planning process broadens out to:-

- What is important to the person
- What would I like changed and what can be changed
- What may take time and,
- What may never be able to be changed

It broadens out further to identify:-

- How can I/we make some changes.
- How can I get more of what I like to do.
- Is there something I would love to do, but is not possible. It may be possible with some creative thinking.

At this stage it is time to identify:-

- Who will take on the identified tasks.
- Can the person be involved in some of these tasks.

These steps may take time!

How powerful information, knowledge and encouragement builds confidence. Small positive steps can be very rewarding for the person and their family.

Community is changing Opportunities for people with a disability have advanced, and further advancement will happen, The Disability Act, Fairer Victoria, the State Plan and Disability Action Plans will ensure a changing society and greater access to services for Victorian's with a disability.

It takes time! During the time I have worked in DCS I have seen significant change and these change have often been driven by parents, parents who have challenged the system. They wanted something different, and they wanted something that reflected the needs and ability of their child [family member].

They challenged the system and paved the way for other families to follow. They demonstrated to others that you can make changes, sometimes these small changes grow. They influence the service system, and it's OK.

Disability Client Services is one program that can provide assistance with planning Case Management provide assistance with planning.

The process of planning can identify community based supports, supports that will strengthen informal supports, short term or one-off disability support.

Currently a ISP/Facilitation team is being established within DCS to address the planning and review obligations for those people have an existing package of supports, ie ISP.

Futures For Young Adults (FFYA):-

Transitioning from school is a time were assistance with planning is offered to all students with a disability moving from school into an adult option.

The FFYA program is designed to support students transition from school. into a post school option/s. Teachers,, student and family members explore options and possibilities during the final year of school.

FFYA is now a 3 year transition program, during the 3 years an annual review takes place these reviews, particular the 3rd year identifies and confirms post FFYA options/pathways.

In many cases the review process has identified that the person may have ongoing disability specific support needs., at this stage the person's need is registered on the Disability Support Register. Applications are verified. From here, an allocation of a resource is made. This resource is known as an ISP which is ongoing and supports the person to determine their individual support needs and goals.

In July 2008,, FFYA 1 - 8/Community Options, Home First program and Support and Choice became known as an Individual Support package. CO/S&C and Home First all had their own set of business rules and guidelines. Very challenging for all concerned!

As an ISP there is the one set of guidelines and funding principles. This leads us to the purpose of the Disability Support Register. The DSR is a register, it is not a waiting list.

It may be established during a planning process that disability specific support may be required and that those support would be considered ongoing.

A DSR application form may be completed. This is often done by a case manager in consultation with the person and/or their family.

All requested support must align with the Objectives and Principles of the Disability Act 2006.

If the request is in line with the Objectives and Principles of The Act, the application is then considered for

Verification.

Ongoing resource allocation is done via the DSR and dependent on a funding resource being available.

Needless to say demand is far greater than the resource available.

SUPPORT PLANS

Many of you would be familiar with Support Plans. The act stipulates that any person receiving ongoing disability service is required to have a support plan.

It is the responsibility of the disability service provider to ensure the person has a support plan in place. Support plans are to be reviewed as least once every 3 years.

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT PACKAGE

Are Disability Services funds that are allocated to a person as a contribution towards meeting their disability support needs. The support should complement generally available community services and informal support such as family, carers and friends.

A package may purchase, Individual support or a place in a group based support such as a day service.

ISP's are designed to enable people with a disability to exercise choice in obtaining support that assists them in pursuing their chosen lifestyle. .

Supports must be planned and implemented in a way that reflects the Objectives and Principles of the Disability Act 2006.

REQUEST FOR ONGOING. DISABILITY SUPPORT

The person must have a current and ongoing need for support

Planning must occur prior to a DSR request being lodged

Request must align with funding principles

Notional funding requirement based on a unit prices

Funding request aligned to DSR band

Determination of priority status

DSR is not a waiting list

RESOURCE CO ORDINATION AND ALLOCATION

Applications are considered once funding becomes available

Funding decisions are based on relative need

A priority Access panel makes decisions based on priority for access indicators

Available resources are matched to the corresponding band level

ISP GUIDELINES 2008

Supports are based on an individual planning process
Funding is attached to the individual and is portable
People can choose their preferred provider
Purchasing principles/business rules apply

ISP PROCESS

1. Person registered on the DSR,
2. ISP resource becomes available
3. Person is advised of the availability of a resource
4. Person is engaged in a planning process
5. Funding proposal is submitted to the region
6. Person is advised of funding allocation
7. Implementation/Facilitation
8. Review minimum every 3 years.'

Information can be accessed on the DHS website at:-

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability/publications-library>

LISA Comment: It all sounds so good! But how much is just smoke and mirrors? A wonderful shop-front, with little in the store!

In practical terms, the National Times report of October 13, 2009, by Sandy Guy, "A mother's lament for disabled care", makes interesting reading on the following link.....

<http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/society-and-culture/a-mothers-lament-for-disabled-care-20091012-gtx4.html>

Tony & Heather Tregale

LIFESTYLE IN SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION (LISA) INC.

Tel: 03-9434-3810.