

How the NDIS can help your clients living with mental illness

- The **National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)** takes a lifetime approach to ensure people with a lifelong disability have the 'reasonable and necessary' supports they need to live an ordinary life.
- Mainstream supports, such as those provided by GPs and other healthcare services (a client's psychiatrist, psychologist, and tertiary mental healthcare services, for example) will continue, and are key to ensuring that NDIS participants receive the full range of supports that they need.
- The NDIS supports participants where their disability has a functional impact across one or more of the six NDIS life domains.
- Participants accepted into the scheme with mental illness will be considered to have psychosocial disability, and as such will receive psychosocial supports through an NDIS plan.
- **As their lawyer**, you are key in assisting your client to be aware of the NDIS and how they can access it. Accessing the NDIS only needs to be done once in their lifetime.

To access the NDIS, your client needs to be **under 65**, an **Australian citizen** or holding a Permanent Visa or a Protected Special Visa (SCV), and their **mental illness** has a functional impact across **one or more** of the following domains:

- **Social interaction**
- **Self-care**
- **Self management**
- **Learning**
- **Communication**
- **Mobility**

The NDIS takes a lifetime approach. Assisting your client by contacting HelpingMinds, who can support your client with their NDIS application, will enable them to receive practical supports to help them live their best life.

Below are some examples of clients you may see who could benefit from NDIS supports:

Lewis's story

Lewis became a client of yours after being assaulted. Lewis was diagnosed with early episode psychosis at 19, having been hospitalised in psychiatric units several times as a teenager. Now 21, his psychiatrist continues to work with him. He is enrolled at university but is missing more classes due to his illness. He is finding it difficult to understand lecture content (learning) due to increased symptoms. His father often attends his GP appointments with him, and indicates non-compliance with medication despite Lewis believing he has taken his medication (self management). His father is becoming increasingly anxious about Lewis's care and future because he is a single parent and FIFO worker, meaning that Lewis regularly spends weeks without any informal supports which makes him vulnerable.

The NDIS can support Lewis and his family by providing a support worker to prompt Lewis to take his medication, complete assisted daily living and attend university.

Jenaya's story

Jenaya, 32, became a client as she is in need of a VRO. In speaking with Jenaya you find it hard to understand her as she has rapid speech and is finding it hard to focus on the conversation (communication). Jenaya's sister is present at the appointment and explains Jenaya has bipolar disorder and that she's stopped taking her medication (self management). The stress of her relationship has taken its toll on Jenaya – she has mentioned that she is not coping with everyday tasks. This stress has also caused Jenaya to have no interest in her personal hygiene (self-care). Jenaya is becoming increasingly withdrawn and you find engagement with her difficult (communication).

The NDIS can support Jenaya when she is unwell by providing a support worker who can assist her to re-establish self-care routines, prompt her to take her medication and attend appointments. Jenaya's NDIS supports can assist her to build capacity to participate in the community so she can improve her social interaction and communication skills.

For support to guide your clients with mental illness through the access process contact HelpingMinds on (08) 9427 7100 or intake@helpingminds.org.au

This project is an NDIS Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) initiative. For more ILC events and resources please visit <http://www.disability.wa.gov.au/wa-ndis/wa-ndis/information-linkages-and-capacity-building/resources/>



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Communities**

