



Empowered Connections

Choosing Your Own Supports

A Workbook for People with Disability and their Families

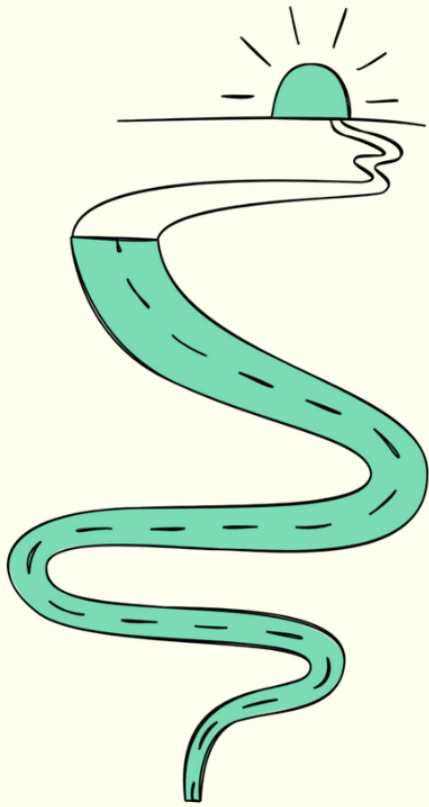
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INTRODUCTION: Choosing Your Own Supports

Choosing your own supports is an important part of having control over your life and being able to follow your personal goals. This workbook is designed to help you think about what kind of support you need, how you like to receive support, and how to find the right people.

Why is it important to choose your own supports?

The right support can help you feel more independent and able to participate fully in life. Choosing your own supports allows you to make decisions about what works best for you.

Everyone's needs are different and having the freedom to choose your own supports means you can find people who understand your needs and respect your preferences. This can help you feel more in control of your life and more confident about your choices.

This workbook will help you:

- Understand the importance of choice and control.
- Discover what kind of support you need.
- Find the right support for your needs.



The Importance of Choice and Control

Choosing your own supports is a key part of achieving your vision of the good life. It's not just about getting help—it's about taking charge of your life and making decisions that reflect who you are and what you want. When you choose your own supports, you are in charge of how you live, work, and connect with the people around you.

You are the expert on your own life.

No one knows your needs, preferences, or goals better than you. That's why it's important that you have control over decisions about your supports. Whatever your support needs are, it's important that the support you receive matches your individual needs and helps you feel empowered. You deserve support that helps you feel respected, understood, and in control of your own life.

When you think about the life you want, what comes to mind? It could be:

- Living independently.
- Working in a job you enjoy.
- Being part of your community.
- Learning new skills.

Supports should help you achieve these goals, not limit your independence. It's okay to take time to explore your options and decide what works best for you. Ask questions, meet with potential support workers, and think about how each option makes you feel. If something isn't working for you, it's okay to change your mind. What's most important is that you feel comfortable and empowered with the decisions you make.

What Support Do You Need?

Support is any help you need to live your life in a way that feels right for you. This might include physical help, emotional help, or social help. Support can help you feel more confident, independent, and connected to the world around you.

Examples of support include:

- **Daily tasks:** Dressing, cooking, cleaning.
- **Transportation:** Getting to school, work, or appointments.
- **Skill-building:** Learning new skills like using public transport or managing money.
- **Social connections:** Meeting new people or joining activities.
- **Emotional support:** Managing stress or overwhelming feelings.

Think about where you could use help: at home, at school or work, in your community, or with your health and well-being. Understanding these areas will help you find support that makes life easier and more enjoyable.

Areas you might need support



At Home

- Cooking, cleaning, and laundry.
- Personal hygiene like showering or getting dressed.
- Managing medications and attending appointments.
- Managing money, paying bills, and budgeting.

In the Community

- Getting to appointments, shops, or events.
- Joining community activities or clubs.
- Navigating new places or public transport.
- Building confidence in social situations.

Health and Wellbeing

- Emotional support for stress or anxiety.
- Access to therapy or counselling.
- Help with physical health, like exercise or mobility aids.
- Managing healthcare appointments, and medication.

Learning and Skill-building

- Learning to cook, clean, or manage money.
- Developing social skills and making friends.
- Gaining confidence with technology.
- Getting help with education or work training.

What are the most important areas of support for you?



Support at Home

- Do you need help remembering things like medication or bills?
- Would help with cleaning or cooking be useful?
- Would you like support with grocery shopping or meal prep?

Support in the Community

- Do you feel comfortable going out alone, or would having someone with you help?
- Do you need help finding or joining activities or events?
- Would support in social situations or meeting new people be helpful?

Support with Health and Wellbeing

- Do you need help staying calm in stressful situations?
- Would talking to a therapist or counsellor help?
- Do you need help with exercise or using medical devices?

Support with Learning and Skill Building

- Do you want to learn a new skill for work or daily life?
- Do you need help practising social skills or building confidence?
- Do you want to build skills that support you to gain more independence?

Choosing the Right Supports

Choosing the right support workers is a key part of making sure your needs are met in a way that works for you. Knowing what is important to you helps you find support workers who understand your needs and can support you in the best way possible.

What to consider when choosing support workers:

- **Type of support needed:** Peer support, personal care, or community support?
- **Preferred working style:** Do you prefer working with one person or a team?
- **Frequency of support:** Daily, weekly, or occasional support?

Qualities of a good support worker:

A good support worker isn't just someone who helps with tasks. They should:

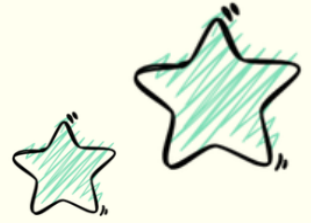
- Respect your choices.
- Listen to you and understand your needs.
- Make you feel safe, happy, and confident.

Think about the kind of person you would feel comfortable spending time with. You might prefer someone who:

- Has a good sense of humour.
- Shares similar interests with you.
- Respects your cultural or personal beliefs.
- Supports your gender identity or sexuality.

The next few pages will help you think about what good support looks like for you..

What does good support look like to you?



Types of Support

- **Personal care:** Help with daily tasks like dressing, bathing, and cooking.
- **Peer support:** Offer advice from lived experience.
- **Job coaches:** Help with employment skills like resumes and interviews.

Support Worker Qualities

- Do you want someone with a good sense of humour?
- Do you want someone who supports your gender identity or sexuality
- Is the person's age or gender important to you?

Support Worker Skills

- Do you need someone who knows how to use assistive technology?
- Do you want someone who can help in social situations?
- Do you need someone who works well as part of a team?

Other?

- Do you want someone who has experience supporting people with your disability?
- Do you need someone who can work flexible hours?
- Do you want someone who shares your culture or interests?

Where to find support workers



Disability Service Providers

- Some providers specialise in particular types of support, such as mental health or intellectual disability.
- Service providers should find workers who match not only your needs but also your personality and preferences.

Online

- Online platforms and apps like Hireup and Mable allow you to search for support workers in your area.
- It's important to check that support workers have a current NDIS worker screening check.

Ask people you trust

- Ask family and friends: They may know of a worker who is reliable, friendly, and skilled.
- Peer support groups: In these groups, people often share recommendations, tips, and advice.

Other

- Disability expos where you can meet with service providers and support workers.
- Students studying social work, occupational therapy, or nursing.

Things to think about when interviewing support workers



Skills and Experience

- Do they have experience with your disability or the types of tasks you need help with?
- Do they have the training and skills for your specific needs (e.g., personal care, assistive technology, or social support)?

Personality

- Do they make you feel safe and comfortable?
- Are they respectful of your personal space and boundaries?
- Do they have a positive attitude and make you feel confident?

Availability

- Can they work at the times you need support (morning, evening, weekends)?
- Are they flexible if you need to adjust the schedule due to changing circumstances?

Trial periods

- Have a trial period where you can see how well they fit your needs.
- Pay attention to how comfortable you feel, whether they respect your preferences, and how well they perform the tasks.

Practical Activities for Choosing Your Own Supports

Worksheet 1: Understanding Your Support Needs

What kind of support do I need? Tick the boxes or write/draw your thoughts in the space provided.

- ☐ Help with daily tasks (like dressing, cooking, or cleaning).
- ☐ Support getting to places (like school, work, or appointments).
- ☐ Help learning new skills (like using public transport or managing money).
- ☐ Social support (like meeting new people or joining activities).
- ☐ Emotional support (help with stress or big feelings).

☐ Other: _____



Worksheet 2: My Ideal Support Worker

What Qualities Are Important to Me? Tick the ones that matter to you. Add anything else you think is important.

- ☐ Calm and patient
- ☐ Friendly and positive
- ☐ Good at listening to me
- ☐ Reliable (arrives on time and keeps promises)
- ☐ Knows how to help with my specific needs (like using technology or physical tasks)
- ☐ Helps me feel more confident and independent
- ☐ Respects my personal space and boundaries
- ☐ Can handle stressful or tricky situations

Write or draw what matters most to you:

Worksheet 3: Finding My Support Worker

Step-by-step plan to find the right support worker. Write or draw your thoughts.

Step 1: Where will I look first? Write down where you will start, e.g. talking to your LAC or searching online.

Step 2: Who can help me with the process? Is there someone you trust, like a family member or friend, who can support you?

Step 3: What am I looking for? What skills or qualities are important to you in a support worker?

Worksheet 4: Interviewing Support Workers

Use this checklist to help you decide whether the support worker is a good fit for you:

- ☐ I felt comfortable with them.
- ☐ They listened to what I had to say.
- ☐ They understood my needs and respected my choices.
- ☐ They have the skills I need for support.
- ☐ I think they can help me feel more independent.
- ☐ I would feel comfortable asking for help from them.

☐ Other thoughts: _____

Do I want to hire them? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure yet

What will I do next?

Who will help me make this decision?

Keeping Track: Use this space to keep track of their names and any thoughts you have.

Name of Support Worker

Things I Liked

Any Concerns

Key Tips

Choosing Your Own Supports

- **Think about what help you need:** Decide where you need support, like at home, at work, or with social activities.
- **Decide what's important to you:** Think about the qualities you want in a support worker, like being kind, reliable, or understanding.
- **Ask for help finding support workers:** Use online platforms, ask your NDIS planner, or talk to friends and family for recommendations.
- **Meet the support worker first:** Meet with them to see if you feel comfortable and if they understand your needs.
- **Ask questions:** Ask about their experience, availability, and how they can help with your specific needs.
- **Trust your feelings:** Choose someone you feel comfortable with and who listens to you.
- **It's okay to change your mind:** If the support worker isn't the right fit, it's okay to find someone else.

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FIND OUT MORE



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1800 Support Hub number 1800 844 933

www.empoweredconnections.org.au

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This workbook was developed with the support
of a Lotterywest grant