



NDIS Quality  
and Safeguards  
Commission



NDIS Workforce  
Capability Framework

# Supervising for Capability

## Working Together: A Guide For NDIS Participants

September 2023



## Contents

User icon key.....	1
Introduction .....	2
What is in this guide .....	2
Using this guide.....	2
Section 1: When to have conversations and how to prepare for them .....	3
When to have conversations .....	3
Preparing for conversations.....	3
Recording outcomes .....	4
Giving and receiving feedback.....	4
Section 2: The Conversation Guide.....	6
Setting up the participant-worker relationship .....	6
Worker capability.....	7
Understanding what is important.....	7
Providing support .....	7
Checking in.....	8
Other useful resources.....	9

## User icon key

Each document in the NDIS Workforce Capability Framework suite of resources uses one or more icons to show the intended user or users.

Icon	Key
	NDIS participants
	Workers
	Supervisors and frontline managers
	Senior managers and leaders
	NDIS providers

---

## Introduction

NDIS participants play an important role in how their workers are supervised and supported. NDIS participants have different levels of interest in workforce supervision. Self-managing NDIS participants can use these resources as a guide when they are working with intermediaries, like platform providers or working with people you engage or employ yourself, like direct employees or sole traders.

When a provider supervises your workers, you often need to explain what you want and are well placed to let your worker know when they are doing well and when things need to be done differently. You can choose if and how you want to be involved in supporting the supervision of your workers and you can use this guide for ideas about how to do this. It can support you to have productive conversations with your worker and their supervisor and build good working relationships with workers so you receive the support you need.

## What is in this guide

This guide has two sections.

- The first section lists common situations where it may be good to communicate with your worker or your worker and their supervisor about your expectations and how they will work with you. It also suggests things to think about to prepare for these conversations.
- The second section provides a series of questions and reminders you can use to guide these discussions. It also includes examples to show how the questions could be used in different situations.

## Using this guide

This guide is designed to support two-way communication between you and your worker, and three-way communication between you, your worker and your service provider. You can use this guide to support you to think about the information you want to share.

It is likely that the provider you use is already using these resources to support their approach to supervising workers. If not, you could suggest that they use the Supervising for Capability resources to support you in establishing and discussing the way they work with you.

---

## Section 1: When to have conversations and how to prepare for them

Strong, trusted relationships are at the heart of good support, and ongoing, open communication is the key to effective working relationships. The first step in establishing this kind of relationship is for everyone to be clear about expectations and responsibilities and to agree on how you will let them know how things are going and how they will make changes as needed along the way. You should let your worker know how you prefer to communicate. When using providers you should let the provider and the worker's supervisor know how you prefer to communicate. Also, think about whether you want to involve someone else in these conversations, such as a family member or friend.

### When to have conversations

Here are a few examples of when you might want to have these conversations:

- You are about to start receiving supports from a provider: You meet with your provider so they can get to know you and understand the support you need. Documents like your NDIS Plan and the service agreements provide a general description of your supports. These talks give you an opportunity to explain how you would like this to happen.
- A new worker is about to join your support team: You decide what information you want the new worker to have to help them understand your needs. There are lots of ways to do this. Some participants like to explain this in person, others prefer the worker to first look at the information you have already provided.
- You want to talk with your worker about changing the way they do something: You and your worker refer back to your earlier agreement on expectations and agree on how to adjust it so that everyone is clear about what changes are needed. You can also use this to give the worker feedback about how they are going.

### Preparing for conversations

Thinking about what you want your workers or the provider to know about you and any questions you have will help to get the most out of these conversations. You might also want to involve someone else, such as a family member or friend.

**Using questions to suit your situation:** the Conversation Guide in Section 2 presents a series of questions based on the capabilities in the [NDIS Workforce Capability Framework](#) (the [Framework](#)), which describe the attitudes, skills and knowledge expected of NDIS workers. You can use the Framework for ideas about other questions to include. The main headings in the Conversation Guide link to the relevant core capabilities in the Framework.

Depending on your support needs, you may also want to consider the [additional identity capabilities](#). These describe capabilities workers should have to support you if you are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, culturally and linguistically diverse or LGBTIQ+. There are also additional specialised capabilities you can select for specific support needs such as being a child with disability. If you need

support for high intensity daily personal activities, you will find these capabilities described in the [High Intensity Support Skills Descriptors](#).

## Recording outcomes

Recording key points from your talks gives you, your worker and their supervisor a record to refer to in future talks. Providers will have different ways to do this, and you should discuss the best approach so you can all access the key points of agreement. For example, you might decide to list the main points you want your workers to know about in a note on the fridge or in your room and keep a more detailed record in a shared folder that your workers and their supervisor have access to.

When you are directly engaging a worker you may find you can use similar methods for keeping track of talks you have, but other methods like following up with a text or email can also mean you all have a record of the agreement.

Whatever the arrangements, you need to be comfortable that this information is managed and shared appropriately and respects your right to privacy.

## Giving and receiving feedback

Good working relationships rely on being able to give and receive open, honest feedback. Being able to talk with your worker about any concerns or questions means you can address them before they end up becoming big problems. Here are some tips to help you when having these conversations.

- Make a habit of checking in with your worker to let them know how things are going. How you do this depends on how well you know your worker. For example, if you are just getting to know each other, you could agree to spend the last five minutes of a shift or set up a weekly time to raise any issues that you have not had a chance to discuss.
- Let your worker know what they are doing well – do not only comment on things you are not happy about.
- Giving examples of what you are commenting on and explaining how it affects you makes it easier for your worker to understand what to keep doing and what might need to change.

General feedback	A better option
<i>'I like the way you support me'</i>	<i>'It was good the way you checked with me before serving up lunch. I really wanted to finish my game and having to stop then would have ruined my score!'</i>
<i>'You never turn up when you say you will'</i>	<i>'You were half an hour late on Friday. It is a real problem for me if I do not know when you are coming. I was late getting to my Friday appointment. Could you let me know well before if you cannot make it at the agreed time?'</i>

- Build a shared understanding about roles and expectations. You can use the questions in Section 2 of this guide to do this. Having open discussions with your worker about what you can expect of

---

each other and making a note of what you agree to, gives you something to refer to when giving feedback about how things are going.

- Do not panic. These types of conversations can sometimes raise strong emotions. For example, your worker might feel upset or defensive if they feel criticised or they might say something you find upsetting. If this happens, there is no need to change what you are saying to make them feel better but how you approach this conversation will influence the outcome. You can let them know that you understand that they are upset. If emotions are running high, it can also help to have a break and come back when you both have had a chance to think about the issues raised.
- Give the worker a chance to ask questions and explain their point of view.
- Keeping an open mind will help you both find agreed solutions rather than getting stuck talking about who is right or who is to blame. It can also help you understand what might be getting in the way of a worker doing something you are asking of them.
- If you decide to make changes, it is useful for you both to keep a record so you can refer to it in future. There could also be things you or your worker want to follow up with the supervisor, so your worker gets the support they need.

---

## Section 2: The Conversation Guide

This section provides some tips on having conversations with workers and providers about your needs and expectations. It includes some questions you might like to ask yourself when preparing to have these conversations. It also provides practical examples to show how these questions could be used. You can click on each of the headings to see the relevant core capabilities from the Framework.

### Setting up the participant-worker relationship

#### Information you want others to know:

- Do you have any specific preferences or needs to support you to communicate with your worker?
- Are there other people in your life or your support team that your workers should know about or work with?
- Do you know who to contact if you have an issue or concern you want to raise with the NDIS provider rather than with the worker?
- Do you know who to contact and what role any third party might play in the relationship you have with your worker, e.g. a plan manager, a platform for engaging workers?
- Have you agreed on the kinds of information you are happy for your workers to have access to or share with others?

**Example:** Effie has said that privacy is very important to her. She explains that she does not want her support workers to contact her behaviour support practitioner or pass on information about her. The supervisor talks to Effie about when and what type of information her worker needs to share and who they can share it with to respect Effie's privacy and also keep her safe.

**Example:** Nam employs his own workers and wants them to work as a team to support his needs. He gets consent from each worker when they start to share their phone numbers with his other workers and his partner. He explains that he is comfortable for workers to share information about his health needs with other workers and his partner if he has agreed.

---

## Worker capability

### How do you want to be involved in checking your worker is capable?

- When a worker needs to learn something new, do you want someone like a family member or a health practitioner to be involved in explaining what to do?
- How will you know that the worker has the capabilities they need?

**Example:** ABC Support Services support Gina's five-year-old daughter who relies on tube feeding. It is very important to Gina that she feels confident that the worker has the capabilities they need. Gina has always trained her daughter's workers to understand exactly how she needs to be supported.

A new support worker will be starting on Monday after recently completing a training course. Gina talks with the supervisor and agrees that she will provide some additional hands-on training. When she is confident that the worker is ready to work independently, she organises for the supervisor to visit to observe how the new team member is going. They use the capabilities and High Intensity Support Skills Descriptors to check that the new worker is meeting both Gina's expectations and the provider's quality standards.

## Understanding what is important

### What do your workers need to know about you and your goals?

- What do your workers need to know about what is important to you and how you want to be supported?

**Example:** Maya is an Aboriginal woman living with quite high health care needs. Maya grew up in a remote part of Western Australia but has been living in the city for the last few years to be close to medical support. Maya explains that she wants to get back to country and family. The supervisor and the worker talk with Maya about who could support her with this. She nominates some people from her community she wants to involve and, together with her support workers and health care team, they plan how to make this work.

## Providing support

### How do you want your workers to support you?

- From time to time, you or your worker may be aware of a situation that presents a risk to your safety, the safety of your worker or of others around you. If this happens, how do you want to discuss and manage this?



**Example:** Angelo is a young man living with autism. He explains to Rex (his worker) that he wants to get out more to meet new people but that he gets agitated if the environment is too noisy or brightly lit. He meets with Rex and his supervisor to plan how to manage this so he can feel confident when he is out and explain what he wants Rex to do if he starts feeling anxious or stressed.

**Example:** Aliya is blind and directly engages support for meal preparation. She likes to do as much as she can herself. She knows how to use the assistive technology she has to read labels, and is confident using techniques to safely cut food. At the start of each shift she asks the worker to talk through any safety concerns they can see and shares a list of common things to look for. When a safety issue is identified, Aliya discusses with the worker the way to make things safer.

## Checking in

### How and when will you check in with your worker?

- Do you have any feedback on how things are going? What is good and what could be better or different?
- Do you feel comfortable to give feedback to your worker about the support you are getting – either positive or negative? If not, what makes it difficult to do this?
- Are there ways you want to be supported to provide feedback to others?
- Do you want to arrange a regular time with the supervisor and the worker to discuss how things are going?

**Example:** Rhonda is generally happy about the support she gets from Nan although lately Nan is spending a lot of time on her phone. Rhonda does not want to upset Nan so she has not raised it and is also worried that if she mentions it to the service provider, she will get Nan in trouble.

If Rhonda and Nan agree in advance about how and when to check in with each other it can help when they have to talk about something hard. Rhonda suggests that they make a time once a fortnight to have a cup of tea and a chat about how things are going overall.

Rhonda finds out that Nan has a daughter who has been sick and was checking with her childcare centre that she was okay. Nan realises that she has been a bit distracted and arranges for the centre to contact her partner if there is an issue with her child during working hours.

---

## Other useful resources

- [NDIS Workforce Capability Framework](#): describes the attitudes, skills and knowledge required by all workers – including supervisors – and the behaviours you can expect to see.
- [High Intensity Support Skills Descriptors](#): guidance for NDIS providers and workers supporting participants with high intensity daily personal activities.