

BrainLink Support Coordination

About BrainLink

BrainLink was established in Victoria in 2006. BrainLink is a not for profit charitable organisation committed to reducing the impact of brain injuries. Brain injuries can be caused by trauma, infection, tumours, substance abuse, stroke and degenerative neurological diseases (such as MS, Motor Neurone disease and Parkinson's disease).

What Does BrainLink Do?

BrainLink provides support and education to people who care for someone with a brain injury and NDIS Support Coordination to people with a brain injury. We also manage a website which contains information and guidance on how to support someone with a brain injury.

BrainLink Support Coordination

Having a BrainLink **Support Coordinator** means that people have a coordinator who specialises in working with people with a brain injury, and who knows about building community. We build relationships and work in partnership with you and other service providers. We seek to earn your trust and respect, based on your experiences of our work.

Our team recognises that the person with the disability is often supported by family or friends. The BrainLink point of difference is that our team can assist the family as well. We can provide a wraparound service for both the person with the brain injury and those who support and care for them. BrainLink holds funding for carers of people with a brain injury in each region of metropolitan Melbourne. We run a variety of activities to support carers across greater Melbourne.

Support Coordination is a new role that has emerged along with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). A support coordinator has a different role to that of a case manager. Some of the key things that you can expect from a support coordinator are:

1. Setting up a service agreement. A service agreement is considered best practice for all providers when using your NDIS funding, including support coordination. The service agreement tells you about some of the rules that apply, how BrainLink will work with you and how much the service will cost. Your support coordinator will then bill against your plan for all time spent including face to face contact, phone calls, texts, and emails and research into services you might need.

2. Risk assessment. It is common to have a risk assessment when starting a service with a company or individual that provides support coordination or any other service that is delivered in your home. This may be daunting as it asks you to re-live your past risks and experiences. We just want to ensure that all risk to yourself or to others is accounted for and action plans on how to handle the risk, however unlikely it might be, are put in place.

3. Punctual for appointments. Our support coordinators will keep track of appointments and turn up on time. If you have problems remembering appointments speak to your support coordinator as they may be able to support you to set up a system such as a diary or a digital calendar so that you can keep track of appointments.

4. Knowledge of a variety of providers, choice and control. The main role of a support coordinator is to search for service providers in a participant's area. BrainLink has a good knowledge and database of all kinds of supports. BrainLink will always aim to provide you with a choice of a few providers to choose from and allow you to take your pick or change when preferred.

5. Funded and non-funded supports. Support coordinators can also search and suggest supports that are not funded on the NDIS. Housing, education, community meetup groups are some of things that can be accessed. It is also possible to seek assistance to coordinate GP, specialist, and medical appointments through a support coordinator, however due to privacy we may be limited in the information we can provide medical teams.

6. Knowledge of the Price Guide. Knowing the key aspects of the price guide is key to working as a support coordinator. It is a very lengthy and complicated document so if they don't know it off by heart, they will find out and get back to you by calling a plan manager or the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).

7. Efficiency. The coordination role is one that requires a lot of organisational skills. Keeping track of all funded supports and making sure one does not run out of funding before the plan ends is an important part of their role.

8. Capacity building. A support coordinator should be helping a participant to coordinate their own supports if they are able to. Our aim is to try and make you as independent as possible to be able to have as much choice and control with your NDIS plan. Unlike case management, the goal of the support coordinator is to try and support you to be able to handle the future coordination independently, if you are capable of doing so.

9. Regular check-ins. For many participants who do not have many informal supports from friends and family, the support coordinator is there as your first point

of contact if you need assistance with implementing your NDIS plan. However, one must make note on the number of hours contacting a support coordinator as every minute is billed, so use the time wisely to reduce the risk of running out of funding. A support coordinator's contact with a participant will be much more during the start and end of the plan. In between when supports have been put in place, it can be expected that there will be brief check-ins to discuss how the plan is going and if any changes need to be made.

10. Review. Towards the end of the plan, about three months before the plan ends, the support coordinator should start preparing for the scheduled plan review. If you are unhappy before the plan ends, and want to apply for an unscheduled review, the support coordinator can also guide you through the process. Collecting reports from therapists, providers and preparing a review document is part of the procedure. The support coordinator can attend the review meeting. However, they are not meant to advocate on behalf of the participant.

11. Working in Partnership. Your support coordinator will work in partnership and collaboration with other service providers to work out who will look after what aspects of your care.

What if I have a problem with my services?

Part of the Support Coordination role is to work with people and help them set up a service agreement for each of the supports that they receive. BrainLink support coordinators check in regularly with the people we support and if there are any concerns, we will work with them to identify the reason for the concern and seek to address it with the provider. If it can't be addressed to the participant's satisfaction, then we will work with the participant to locate another provider that will meet the participant's requirements.

What if I have a problem with BrainLink?

Just like any other provider in the NDIS, BrainLink is required to set up a Service Agreement with every person we work with. Our service agreement outlines how we work with people, our responsibilities, and the specifics of the supports we provide, tailored to each individual. Within the service agreement we also list who to call if a participant wants to register a complaint, as well as the contact details of external oversight bodies.

How can our BrainLink Support Coordinator help you?

Our role is to support participants to quickly get their funded plan up and running. With over 10 years of supporting people with a brain injury to build lives within the

community we have a vast array of experience to draw upon and can offer helpful suggestions along the way. We work as a partner alongside people with disability and their families and we see ourselves as a trusted advisor. Our staff are professionals who are privileged to work with participants to find the right provider that meets individual needs as well as take care of any issues that hold up acting on a plan.

The NDIS is all about placing the person at the center of everything. This lines up with our organisational mission of building the capacity of people with a brain injury and their families and carers to deal with daily living challenges and complex behavior. Working in partnership we seek to support people to become more empowered and while we work alongside you to help you achieve the goals in your plan, we will also support you to:

- Learn about NDIS and how it works.
- Understand how to get the best value from your support providers
- Address any issues that can arise and work with you to find solutions
- Become more connected

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