



Carer Checklist for *DisabilityCare Australia* Assessment

Under *DisabilityCare Australia*, the National Disability Insurance Scheme, eligible people with disabilities will be assessed for a package of support. Each participant will have an individualised plan that is tailored to their goals, personal circumstances and disability support needs.

What is this checklist for?

The extent of carer involvement in the assessment and planning process will vary according to individual circumstances. It is important for the assessor to understand what your caring role encompasses so that the support package allocated to the person you care for adequately meets both their needs and yours.

Important information may include the nature, extent and frequency of your caring role (i.e. **what** you do as a carer and **how often**) and how caring is **affecting you** and other family members. You will also need to tell the assessor if you **want** to keep providing the same level of care, or if you need extra **help** to keep providing care.

The aim of the support package is to increase the independence of the person you care for as much as possible, as well as reduce their dependence on you. This is an opportunity for you to 'think outside the square' in terms of how you both might like to change your current arrangements.

The questions on the following pages are a prompt to help you think about what you will need to tell the assessor. For those who care for someone with an episodic (on and off) condition or disability, you may need to explain how your caring role changes when the care recipient is relatively 'well' versus when they are unwell.

Please remember, this is not a complete list and there may be other issues you need to discuss with the assessor which aren't mentioned here. A useful question to ask yourself may be; ***"If I was away or unable to care for a week, what would I need to tell the person who took over my caring role?"***

Use the questions and prompts in this checklist as a general guide to make sure you cover everything that you want to during your discussion with the assessor.

The Caring Role

Think about what you do on a daily or weekly basis as well as things you do less frequently. How many hours would you spend each week or month **assisting, supervising** or **prompting** the person you care for with:

Mobility – For example, ensuring they don't fall; helping them to sit up; assistance with moving around the house; turning them during the night; helping them to hold and manage objects.

Personal Hygiene – For example, bathing; dressing; cleaning teeth; grooming; assistance using the toilet; changing continence aids; ordering and obtaining supplies; ensuring they have and are wearing appropriate clothing.

Eating and Drinking – For example, making sure they eat/drink; preparing food; ensuring they don't choke while eating; assistance with tube feeding; keeping check on un-healthy eating patterns.

Communication and Social Participation– For example, helping them communicate their needs to you or to others; assistance with interpreting or understanding information; providing and helping to organise social activities with others; reducing/calming anxiety and fear about leaving the house.

Health and Treatment – For example, deciding on treatment options; arranging or giving medication; prompting the person you care for to take medication; managing wounds or dressings; therapeutic exercises; operating & monitoring medical equipment; providing transport to medical or clinical appointments; waiting while treatment is being provided; prompting the person you care for to follow prescribed treatment.

Safety– For example, ensuring they don't wander off; preventing them from injuring themselves or others; ensuring their environment is safe from trip hazards; providing secure boundaries; checking water temperature; dealing with problematic alcohol and drug use.

Behaviour- For example, supervising and preventing aggressive behaviour; discouraging inappropriate behaviour; reassuring and calming them if they're distressed; helping them manage the symptoms of mental illness (such as hearing voices or delusions).

Domestic Life - For example, encouraging and helping them to get up in the morning and to keep healthy sleeping patterns; helping them to manage their finances; paying rent and bills; helping them shop for groceries; cleaning their house; washing their clothes; helping to care for their pets; transporting them to appointments; to the shops etc.

Advocacy and Representation- For example, negotiating/dealing with others on behalf of the person you care for to manage outstanding accounts; manage their finances; prevent housing eviction.

Coordination of services and support-For example, arranging support staff (such as paid carers); phone calls to providers and government departments to arrange income support or access to services; filling in application and assessment forms; researching support options.

Employment, Education, Training -For example, transporting them to and from work or education/training; reminding them of starting times or projects in need of completion.

Assistive Technology- For example, charging devices; obtaining software; getting items fixed.

The Caring Context

Living Arrangements Does the person you care for live with you? (Either permanently or occasionally). Would either you or the person you care for prefer to change this arrangement?

If the person you care for lives elsewhere, are you responsible for ensuring they have affordable, safe, secure and suitable accommodation? Are you financially responsible for this accommodation? Does it take you a long time to travel to where the person you care for lives?

Are the current living arrangements sustainable in the short to medium term? Will you be able to continue to support the person you care for and do the things you are doing now if you do not get any additional support?

Additional Responsibilities Do you care for more than one person with a disability or illness? Do you care for other family members who do not have a disability? (For example, other children –either your own or the children of the person you care for – or elderly parents). Do you think you may need to care for someone else in the near future? (If yes, will this affect the current level of care you provide?)

Other Carers Does anyone else also undertake caring responsibilities for the person? How do they help?

Culture and Religion Are there particular expectations about the caring role in your community or faith group? Do you have any difficulties getting culturally-appropriate services or supports which take into account your religious practices or aspects of your culture?

Personal characteristics Does your age and size in relation to the person you care for create any difficulties for you? For example, are you able to move the person you care for without hurting yourself?

The Impact of Caring on You

Physical and mental health How are you physically and emotionally? Do you have any medical conditions which currently (or may in the near future) affect your caring role? Does your caring role affect your physical or mental health? For instance, do you experience depression, anxiety or arthritis? Have you sustained any injuries due to caring? Does the behaviour of the person you care for ever put you or other family members at risk of harm or injury?

Financial Do you have any added financial burdens as a result of your caring responsibilities? For example, do you pay for aids/equipment; services/support (e.g. respite, physio); medication/treatment; transport to appointments; home/vehicle modifications; additional cleaning costs (e.g. washing due to incontinence); additional child-care costs (for other dependent children whilst attending to the person you care for).

Time Does your caring role regularly prevent you from meeting other family responsibilities? Does it prevent you from undertaking domestic tasks such as shopping or cleaning, or attending your own medical appointments? Does it isolate you from other family and friends or social activities?

Employment & Education Are you currently in full or part-time work, education or training? Have you had to reduce the time you put into any of these either partly or completely due to your caring role? Would you like to undertake work, education or training but are unable to due to your caring role?

Services and Support

Continuing care Can the current caring arrangements continue over time without more services or support? Do you think you will need to put less time into caring in the near future?

Accessing Services & Support Do you need to travel long distances to get certain services or supports? Do you have private transport? Are you able to use public transport or are you required to use taxis? Are you on any waiting lists to access support? Have you had any issues with the quality of services and support? Have you made any complaints about a service provider?

Caring Needs What would help you with caring? For example, more information on the condition/disability of the person you care for; assistance in looking after your own health and wellbeing; information on financial support which may be available; training in safe lifting techniques; access to counselling or support groups?

Would access to certain services and supports help you to continue providing care? For example, taking a short or a long break from caring while the person you care for is being looked after by someone else; having someone come to your house to help with the personal care of the person you care for; cleaners; professional assistance with guiding and helping you to manage your access to services for the person you care for (case management).

Emergencies/ alternative arrangements Do you have a plan for when you are unable to provide care? (Either in response to a short-term crisis or for the longer-term). Do you need any information or assistance to make such a plan?

Is there anything else the assessor should know?