

## Purpose

Eating and drinking are essential for staying healthy and hydrated. They help us feel good and stay well. Everywhere in the world, mealtimes are a chance to connect with others, enjoy food, and celebrate our culture.

The Life Without Barriers (LWB) My Meals My Way approach outlines the requirements for staff to develop their skills and knowledge. This includes identifying and responding to swallowing and choking risks and assisting individuals who need a Mealtime Management Plan. It also improves the dining experience by allowing the people we support to share their preferences and choices about their eating and drinking support.

When providing mealtime support and assistance. The DSW will follow the [NDIS LWB 5523 Mealtime Support – Procedure](#), [NDIS LWB 5685 HIDPA Severe Dysphagia Management- Procedure](#) (if applicable) and the [NDIS LWB 5518 7 Rights of Mealtime Support](#). To assist in finding any nutritional concerns or swallowing problems for the people we support, the DSW will follow the [NDIS LWB 5520 Nutrition and Swallowing Checklist- Procedure](#).

## Our approach to safe and enjoyable mealtimes

Safety is important, and so is the quality of someone's life. Our role is to support safe and enjoyable mealtimes. To improve mealtime, we first learn about people's likes, dislikes, traditions, and customs. This helps us give them the support they need and helps make mealtime fun and meaningful for everyone.

All LWB staff delivering mealtime supports will engage with the person we support to:

- Ensure the safety and well-being of the person and minimise risk.
- Provide choice and respect for a person's decisions and actions around their food and drinks.
- Support identity, as the person's sense of who they are will impact how they experience mealtimes.
- Get to know the person and how they like to connect with others at mealtimes.
- Engage in meaningful mealtime activities. Involve the person in familiar or new meal-related activities to make them feel valued.
- Create a welcoming, relaxed, and friendly dining environment that can lead to more mealtime enjoyment.
- Support special occasions that include eating and drinking, such as birthdays or cultural holidays.

## Building knowledge and skills

All staff will enhance their practice by completing the following knowledge and skills development activities:

<b>Universal Supports</b>	<p><b>All DMH Disability Support Workers (DSW)</b> will complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DSC Supporting people at mealtimes online module in myLearning.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>All Disability Support Leaders (DSL)</b> will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the ongoing learning and development of all DSWs.</li> <li>Deliver toolbox talks quarterly.</li> <li>Access <a href="#">My Meals My Way – Training and Development page</a> and <a href="#">My Meals My Way Practice Tools and Resource Page</a> and for a range of resources and learning to assist DSWs in strengthening their skills, knowledge and practices to provide person-centred mealtime support.</li> </ul>
<b>Targeted Supports</b>	<p><b>All DMH frontline leaders</b> (DSL, Operational Manager &amp; Regional Operational Manager (ROM)) will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend and complete the My Meal My Way Masterclass (every 2 years).</li> <li>Be oriented by an Appropriately Qualified Health Professional (AQHP) in the specific support required for an individual's plan (every 12 months or earlier).</li> <li>Coach and orientate your staff, including agency staff, with the skills and knowledge to safely implement the individual plans (every 12 months or earlier).</li> <li>Make sure staff receive a refresher on the person's plan every 12 months, even if there are no changes. Provide an earlier refresher if needed.</li> <li>Ensure Mealtime Management Plans are accessible to all staff before they provide support.</li> <li>Confirm that staff understand how to access the individual plans, the specific support required, and any additional relevant information.</li> <li>Remind DSWs about the My Meals My Way resources on the Disability Pathway</li> </ul>
	<p><b>All frontline DMH Disability Support Workers</b> supporting a person with a Mealtime Management Plan need to complete the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Orientation to the specific requirements of the person's plan from a Frontline Leader who has completed the Masterclass 'My Meals My Way', engaged with the AQHP and been oriented to the person's plan.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing learning and coaching of mealtime support skills with their frontline leader.</li> </ul> <p><b>DMH Disability Support Worker supporting a person with Severe Dysphagia</b> will complete training and a skills assessment by an Appropriately Qualified Health Professional (AQHP) per the <a href="#">NDIS LWB 5685 HIDPA Severe Dysphagia Support – Procedure</a>.</p>
<b>Intensive Supports</b>	<p>Bespoke training for teams that is designed and delivered to address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a specific need or</li> <li>following an incident or adverse event.</li> </ul>

If the people we support choose to be involved, staff will support them in participating in all aspects of the orientation about their mealtime support needs. This helps staff understand and respect the person's preferences, leading to better and more personalised support.

## Identifying possible swallowing problems

It's important to spot swallowing problems early because it can prevent serious risks like choking, food going into the lungs (Aspiration), and poor nutrition. Catching these issues early means we can quickly provide the right support and care, keeping the person safe and healthy. Managing swallowing difficulties well can greatly improve their quality of life and overall health.

### Engagement Officers will:

- Explain LWB's approach to My Meals My Way and our commitment to working with the people we support to create safe, positive, and enjoyable eating environments.
- Organise for the person to provide LWB with a copy of their current Mealtime Management Plan (if they have one) and any additional information about their condition or mealtime support needs.

### Disability Support Leader and Disability Support Worker will:

- Engage with the person directly or with someone who knows them well to discuss and understand their specific mealtime support needs in detail.
- Guide the person through the Decision-Making Map:
  - Use the decision-making map on page 8 of the procedure.
- Collect all relevant information about the person's eating and drinking support requirements.

**Annual Nutrition and Swallowing Risk - Checklist:**

**All Disability Support Workers will:**

- Follow [the NDIS LWB 5520 Nutrition and Swallowing Risk Checklist – Procedure](#) and complete the [NDIS LWB 5521 Nutrition and Swallowing Risk – Checklist](#) with the person to identify any potential nutrition and swallowing risks.

- **Note:** If an AQHP determines that certain signs and symptoms (like coughing or gurgling) are acceptable for someone in specific situations, they should document these in the person's Mealtime Management Plan. This makes sure the support provided is tailored to the individual's needs. If the AQHP has assessed and recorded these signs and symptoms in the person's plan, there's no need to file an iReport if they occur as described in the plan.
- If any symptoms change or new symptoms appear, it is essential to document these changes as an iReport event. This ensures that the risk of harm is formally recorded and that all significant changes are promptly addressed.

**If a choking/swallowing incident occurs or risk of harm is identified**

**All Disability Support Workers will:**

- Respond to immediate needs and follow the [Response to Choking Poster](#) as per their First Aid training, including dialling Triple Zero (000) for an ambulance in a medical emergency.
- Follow the steps outlined in [NDIS LWB 5050 Check Support Report](#) for any changes or declining health needs that may increase the risk of a choking or swallowing incident.

**The Disability Support Leader will:**

- Address any immediate health and safety needs of the person.
- Offer the person the opportunity to complete the Nutrition and Swallowing Risk Checklist again
- Assist the person to access an AQHP, such as a General Practitioner, speech pathologist, dietitian, dentist, or respiratory therapist, for further clinical assessment if they choose to do so.
- Provide information, with consent, to the AQHP to assist them in their assessment of the person after a choking incident or difficulty swallowing.

- Escalate to the ROM and State Director any choking or adverse event that occurs or when an immediate risk is identified.

**The Regional Operations Manager will:**

- Investigate the incident or immediate risk and work with the person and staff to make sure that any immediate actions to keep the person safe are developed and implemented.

**Report**

- All Nutrition and Swallowing (choking) incidents and identified risks must be recorded in an iReport event.  
This includes actual choking incidents and near misses — where a person had swallowing difficulties that could have caused harm, even if they didn't choke.
- If a choking/swallowing incident occurs, make sure the person has received emergency first aid and is safe, then immediately contact the DSL or On-call and document the incident in iReport.
- If a risk of harm is identified, report the risk immediately verbally to the DSL or On-Call manager and record it in an iReport event.
- Record all follow-up actions in the iReport event. This could include discussions with the person, family member or another member of the person's support network (including another support provider) and the date when these occurred

**The Disability Support Leader will:**

- Complete the Evidencing Reasonable Steps iReport form within iReport event.

## Evidencing Strategies for Potential Risk of Harm

Any strategies developed to address immediate risks to the person should be recorded in an [NDIS LWB 5550 Health and Wellbeing Alert](#) for staff to follow **and** in an iReport event

Every situation is different and will require specific strategies to handle immediate risks of harm.

Evidencing Reasonable Steps			
Potential Risk of Harm	Immediate Risk Management Strategies	Ongoing Risk Management Strategies	Evidence
The Mealtime Management Plan has expired, and no current plan exists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to the AQHP. They can help you check if the instructions in the plan can still be used until it is reviewed and updated.</li> <li>• Complete a Health and Wellbeing Alert. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– to communicate any changes in support requirements for staff to follow.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All plan review activities with AQHP are completed.</li> <li>• The Mealtime Management Plan has been forwarded to the person and LWB.</li> <li>• DSL has talked with the AQHP to understand the person's plan</li> <li>• DSL has supported staff in understanding and getting familiar with the person's Mealtime Management Plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conversations in Progress Notes under Case Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Conversation Date</li> <li>– Topics Discussed and with whom</li> <li>– Actions taken</li> </ul> </li> <li>• iReport event completed to document risk of harm.</li> <li>• Complete the Evidencing Reasonable Steps iReport form to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Detail Key Risk Strategies</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Evidencing Reasonable Steps			
Potential Risk of Harm	Immediate Risk Management Strategies	Ongoing Risk Management Strategies	Evidence
			Demonstrate a defensible position.
A person is having difficulty swallowing, which increases their risk of choking. They have either already experienced a choking incident or are waiting for a medical appointment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to a doctor or AQHP about the best ways to help someone while they wait for an assessment appointment.</li> <li>• Complete a Health and Wellbeing Alert to communicate any changes in support requirements for staff to follow.– (e.g., stop eating a particular food, eat or drink more slowly)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment completed by AQHP.</li> <li>• AQHP have developed a Mealtime Management Plan and provided a copy to person and LWB.</li> <li>• All plan review activities with AQHP are completed.</li> <li>• The Mealtime Management Plan has been forwarded to the person and LWB.</li> <li>• DSL has talked with the AQHP to understand the person's plan.</li> <li>• DSL has supported staff in understanding and getting familiar with the person's Mealtime Management Plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conversations in Progress Notes under Case Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Conversation Date</li> <li>– Topics Discussed and with whom</li> <li>– Actions taken</li> </ul> </li> <li>• iReport event completed to document risk.</li> <li>• Complete the Evidencing Reasonable Steps iReport form to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Detail Key Risk Strategies</li> <li>– Demonstrate a defensible position</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Upload to Progress Notes and iReport Event: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Health Appointment Records or Hospital Discharge Summaries</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



Evidencing Reasonable Steps			
Potential Risk of Harm	Immediate Risk Management Strategies	Ongoing Risk Management Strategies	Evidence
A change or decline in a person's health that affects their ability to swallow.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GP or AQHP provides verbal or written instructions for temporary adjustments to support requirements.</li> <li>Complete a Health and Wellbeing Alert to communicate any changes in support requirements for staff to follow (e.g., stop eating a particular food, eat or drink more slowly)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment completed by AQHP.</li> <li>AQHP have developed a Mealtime Management Plan and provided a copy to person and LWB.</li> <li>All plan review activities with AQHP are completed.</li> <li>The Mealtime Management Plan has been forwarded to the person and LWB.</li> <li>DSL has talked with the AQHP to understand the person's plan.</li> <li>DSL has supported staff in understanding and getting familiar with the person's Mealtime Management Plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conversations in Progress Notes under Case Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conversation Date</li> <li>Topics Discussed and with whom</li> <li>Actions taken</li> </ul> </li> <li>Complete iReport event to document <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any risk of harm.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Upload to Progress Notes and iReport Event: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health Appointment Records or Hospital Discharge Summaries</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Staff not trained in new or changed Mealtime Support Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact the ROM and discuss the situation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DSL has talked with the AQHP to understand the person's plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conversations in Progress Notes under Case Discussion:</li> </ul>



Evidencing Reasonable Steps			
Potential Risk of Harm	Immediate Risk Management Strategies	Ongoing Risk Management Strategies	Evidence
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact the High Needs Panel for help with immediate risk strategies.</li> <li>• DSL has discussed the person's plan with the AQHP and will provide mealtime support until staff are familiar with and oriented to the plan.</li> <li>• DSL consulted with the AQHP to understand the person's plan. They oversee mealtime support via video link and instruct staff on how to apply the plan.</li> <li>• If DSL cannot talk with the AQHP to understand the person's plan, ask the AQHP to send a video explaining the Mealtime Management Plan for staff familiarisation and orientation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DSL has provided staff familiarisation and orientation to the person's Mealtime Management Plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Conversation Date</li> <li>– Topics Discussed and with whom</li> <li>– Actions taken</li> <li>• iReport event completed to document risk.</li> <li>• Complete Evidencing Reasonable Steps iReport form to detail key risk strategies and demonstrate a defensible position.</li> <li>• Upload to Progress Notes and iReport Event:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Any notes and instructions provided by the High Needs Panel.</li> <li>– Health Appointment Records or Hospital Discharge Summaries</li> <li>– Video Resources</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Evidencing Reasonable Steps			
Potential Risk of Harm	Immediate Risk Management Strategies	Ongoing Risk Management Strategies	Evidence
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arrange for someone familiar with the plan (health professional, experienced staff member, or family member) to oversee mealtimes.</li> </ul>		

## Who needs to have the My Meals My Way Profile completed?

The opportunity to complete the [NDIS LWB 5526 My Meals My Way – Profile](#) should be offered to anyone receiving mealtime support from LWB. The person can decline to complete the profile. Where the person chooses not to complete the profile, this should be recorded in a Progress Note.

Some people may choose not to complete a My Meals My Way Profile as they can communicate their preferences during support. If a person we support has previously declined to complete the My Meals My Way Profile and changes in their ability to communicate their preferences are subsequently identified, the opportunity to complete it must be offered again.

### Review of My Meals My Way Profile.

The My Meals My Way Profile is a living document that captures a person's preferences, which may change over time. To ensure the profile stays up-to-date, staff members should engage with the person and prompt them to review it frequently and make any necessary changes. At a minimum, the profile must be reviewed annually. If no changes are needed, staff should update the profile with the current date and save it as a new document on CIRTIS to provide evidence of the review.

### Supporting participation and choice to create safe and enjoyable mealtimes

Using person-centred active support and the My Meals My Way – Profile ensures a person is at the centre of safe and enjoyable mealtime decisions.

**Note:** The My Meals My Way – Profile is **NOT** a Mealtime Management Plan. The My Meals My Way – Profile helps the person we support to tell us what an enjoyable mealtime is for them. It can be used alongside the requirements of the person's Mealtime Management Plan if one exists.

#### The Disability Support Leader will:

- Communicate in a way that helps the person to make informed choices and provide consent about what, when, and how they enjoy their mealtimes. This includes supporting the person in having conversations with their decision-making support network or authorised decision-maker.
- Support the person in completing their [NDIS LWB 5526 My Meals My Way- Profile](#) OR work with people they trust and feel comfortable with to complete.
- Upload the completed My Meals My Way Profile to CIRTIS: Support Tab > Mealtime Support Tab > Add New Mealtime Support Details OR Edit > Add New Attachment > My Meals My Way Profile SURNAME. First name.YY.MM.DD > Click Save.

- Share the completed My Meals My Way Profile with the person's AQHP for use during the development of a Mealtime Management Plan, as necessary.
- If the person declines to complete the [NDIS LWB 5526 My Meals My Way- Profile](#), the DSL should record a Progress Note with the subject line "Offered to Complete the My Meals My Way Profile". The Progress Note must include:
  - Information detailing what explanation was provided to the person about the purpose of the My Meals My Way - Profile.
  - Details of the information provided to the person about the potential risk/s associated with not completing the My Meals My Way - Profile.
  - Confirmation that the information was provided to the person in a format suitable to their communication needs (details to be provided).
  - How the person indicated that they understood what had been explained.
  - What reason/s did the person give to explain their decision to decline to complete the My Meals My Way - Profile?
- Where the DSL believes there is significant risk/s associated with the person's decision to decline completion of the My Meals My Way Profile, the DSL should escalate their concerns to the ROM for evaluation.

#### **Disability Support Workers will:**

- Assist the person in completing their My Meals My Way Profile if one has not been previously completed or if it requires an update.
- Use the My Meals My Way Profile to support the person in planning, developing, and delivering safe and enjoyable meal times.
- Communicate in a way that supports the person's choice and decision-making and gives them control over what, when, and how they enjoy their mealtimes.

#### **Record**

#### **Disability Support Workers and Disability Support Leaders will:**

- Document any discussions with the person about choice, control, and consent s as a Progress Note on the person's CIRTS file. This will include a description of the person's facial expressions, body language, words and vocalisations regarding choice and consent.

## NDIS LWB 5517 My Meals My Way - Procedure

