

## Purpose

Eating and drinking are not just crucial for nutrition and hydration but contribute significantly to our health and wellbeing. In all parts of the world, mealtimes have been a place of social interaction, a time to nourish ourselves, and an occasion for celebrating and expressing cultural identity. The Life Without Barriers (LWB) My Meals My Way approach is designed to enable the people we support to tell us their preferences and choices around their mealtime support.

The NDIS LWB 5517 My Meals My Way - Procedure will help LWB to achieve our goal to partner with people and change lives for the better. This procedure will be reflected in our practice in supporting children and young people within LWB Children Youth and Families foster care, residential care and aftercare services, and adults in Disability and Mental Health Services.

## Our approach to safe and enjoyable mealtimes

Safety is important, and so is the quality of someone's life. Our role is to support not only safe but enjoyable mealtimes.

Helping a person express their unique likes and dislikes, traditions and customs, attitude toward mealtime and any mealtime support required is very important.

All LWB staff delivering mealtime supports will use person-centred active support to:

- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of the person and minimise risk.
- Provide choice and respect for a person's decisions and actions around food and mealtimes.
- Support identity, as who people 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 roles. Involve the person in familiar or new meal-related activities to make them feel a valued part of an everyday routine.
- Create a welcoming, relaxed, and friendly dining environment that can lead to more mealtime enjoyment.
- Support mealtime events for special occasions, such as birthdays or cultural holidays.

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

For all people who receive mealtime support from LWB, it is best practice that the opportunity to complete the [NDIS LWB 5526 My Meals My Way - Profile](#) is offered. All

people we support have the right to decline to complete the profile. Where a 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 are able to communicate their preferences during each occasion of 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 the My Meals My Way Profile 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 CIRTS to provide evidence of the review.

**Building knowledge and skills**

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| <b>Universal Supports</b> | <p><b>All DMH Disability Support Workers</b> will complete relevant mandatory e-learning modules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dysphagia – Keeping Swallowing Safe</li> <li>• Responding to Choking Events</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Universal Supports</b> | <p>A range of Toolbox talks and resources are available on the My Meals My Way page of the Disability Pathway to promote all Disability Support Workers’ ongoing learning and development.</p>  |
| <b>Targeted Supports</b>  | <p><b>All DMH frontline leaders</b> (Disability Support Leader, Operational Manager &amp; Regional Operational Manager) will complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Masterclass: My Meals My Way - The essential ingredients for following a Mealtime Management Plan</li> <li>• Communities of Practice key focus topics – My Meals My Way: A fork in the road provides a space for some food for thought and learning.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Targeted Supports</b>  | <p><b>All frontline DMH Disability Support Workers</b> supporting a person with a Mealtime Management Plan will be trained by a Frontline Leader (who has completed Masterclass My Meals My Way) in the specific requirements of the person's plan.</p> <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</p>      |

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|                           | (AQHP) as per the <a href="#">NDIS LWB 5685 HIDPA Severe Dysphagia Support – Procedure</a> .                  |
| <b>Intensive Supports</b> | Bespoke training is designed and delivered to address a specific need following an incident or adverse event. |

The people we support will be assisted to participate in all aspects of training and education regarding their mealtime support needs.

## 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 provides the person with the opportunity to express what an enjoyable mealtime can be for them. It can be used alongside the requirements of the person’s Mealtime Management Plan if they have one.

### The Disability Support Leader will:

- Communicate in a way to support the person to make informed choices and provide consent about what, when and how they enjoy their mealtimes. This includes supporting the person to have conversations with their decision-making support network or authorised decision-maker.
- Support the person to complete their [NDIS LWB 5526 My Meals My Way- Profile](#). Work with people they trust and feel comfortable with.
- Ensure the completed My Meals My Way - Profile is uploaded to CIRTS as follows: Support Tab > Mealtime Support Tab > Add New Mealtime Support Details OR Edit > Add New Attachment > My Meals My Way Profile SURNAME.Firstname.YY.MM.DD > Click Save.
- Explain and make available the My Meals My Way - Profile to all new, casual and agency staff before providing support and ensure they understand how to access individual plans and support and any further information.
- Ensure Disability Support Workers are supported to access the My Meals My Way resources on the Disability Pathway.
- Ensure the completed My Meals My Way- Profile is shared with any AQHP for them to use during their assessment and development of mealtime support and management plans, as necessary.
- If a 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 that was 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 to them.
  - What reason/s the person gave 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 Practice Support Lead for evaluation.

**Disability Support Workers will:**

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

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

## Identifying possible swallowing problems

**Intake Staff 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.
- Local Client Services teams are responsible for working with the person or someone who knows the individual well to consider their mealtime support requirements in more depth. They are also responsible for taking the person through the [decision making matrix](#) below to obtain all relevant information on the person's mealtime supports.

## If a choking/swallowing incident occurs

### 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.
- After an incident, and after ensuring the person has received emergency first aid and is safe, contact the Disability Support Leader or On-call immediately and document the incident in i-Sight.
- Report in i-Sight all Nutrition and Swallowing (choking) events. This includes a choking incident and when a person has experienced swallowing difficulties that could have caused harm (near misses) even if the person didn't actually choke.

### The Disability Support Leader will:

- Address immediate health and safety needs of the person and Disability Support Worker.
- Escalate to the Practice Support Lead within the [Centre for Practice Excellence](#) (CPE) any choking or adverse event that occurs or when any immediate risk is identified. The Practice Support Lead will investigate the incident or immediate risk and work together with the person and staff to make sure any immediate actions to keep the person safe are developed and implemented.
- 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.
- Record all follow-up actions in the i-Sight event.
- Record Progress notes detailing actions taken, including discussion with person, family or Provider support team and the date when these occurred.

### Annual Nutrition and Swallowing Risk – Checklist:

The Disability Support Worker will follow the Nutrition and Swallowing Risk Checklist – Procedure to support the person in identifying any potential nutrition and swallowing risks within the checklist.

## Mealtime Support and Assistance

The Disability Support Worker will follow the [NDIS LWB 5523 Mealtime Support – Procedure](#) and [NDIS LWB 5685 HIDPA Severe Dysphagia Management- Procedure](#) when providing mealtime support and assistance.

