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A Comprehensive Guide to NDIS Support Categories: Unpacking Your Plan

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) provides funding to eligible individuals with permanent and significant disabilities to access supports and services that help them achieve their goals. This funding is structured into three main support budgets: **Core, Capital, and Capacity Building**. Each budget is further divided into specific support categories, offering a flexible framework to cater to a wide range of individual needs. Understanding these categories is crucial for participants to effectively utilise their NDIS plan and maximise their independence and community participation.

Core Supports: For Everyday Needs and Activities

The Core Supports budget is the most flexible of the three, designed to help with day-to-day living. In many cases, funding within this budget can be used across its different categories, providing participants with greater choice and control over their supports.

1. Assistance with Daily Life: This category funds supports that help with everyday personal activities, enabling participants to live as independently as possible at home and in the community.

- **What it covers:**
 - Personal care, such as assistance with showering, dressing, and grooming.
 - Household tasks like cleaning, gardening, and meal preparation.
 - Support for mobility and transferring in and out of bed.
 - Assistance with managing medication.
 - Short-Term Accommodation (STA), including respite care, which provides a temporary break for both the participant and their informal carers.

2. Transport: This category provides funding for participants who are unable to use public transport due to their disability.

- **What it covers:**
 - The cost of taxis or other private transport services.
 - Specialised transport arrangements to attend appointments, work, or community activities.

- Funding for a support worker to drive the participant in their own or a provider's vehicle.

3. Consumables: This category is for everyday items that are required due to a disability.

- **What it covers:**

- Continence products.
- Low-cost assistive technology and equipment (typically under \$1,500).
- Specialised nutritional supplements or formulas.
- Wound care supplies.

4. Assistance with Social, Economic and Community Participation: This category helps participants to engage in social and community activities.

- **What it covers:**

- A support worker to assist with attending social outings, community events, or recreational activities.
- Fees for group activities or programs that build skills and encourage community participation.
- Support to participate in volunteering or work experience.

5. Home and Living: This is a stated support category, meaning the funding is allocated for a specific purpose and is less flexible. It focuses on providing options for participants to live as independently as possible.

- **What it covers:**

- **Supported Independent Living (SIL):** For participants who need significant support at home, often in a shared living arrangement.
- **Individualised Living Options (ILO):** A package of supports that allows a participant to choose where and how they live, with flexible and personalised support arrangements.
- **Medium-Term Accommodation (MTA):** Transitional accommodation for participants who are waiting for their long-term housing solution to be ready.

Capital Supports: For Higher-Cost Items and Modifications

The Capital Supports budget is for more expensive, one-off purchases of assistive technology, equipment, and home or vehicle modifications. Funding in this budget is generally not flexible and must be used for the specific purpose it was allocated for.

1. Assistive Technology (AT): This category funds equipment and technology that helps participants with their mobility, communication, and overall independence.

- **What it covers:**

- Mobility equipment such as wheelchairs, scooters, and walking frames.
- Prosthetics and orthotics.
- Communication devices and software.
- Specialised computer equipment.
- Vehicle modifications, such as hand controls or ramps.

2. Home Modifications: This category funds changes to a participant's home to improve accessibility and safety.

- **What it covers:**

- Installation of ramps and handrails.
- Modifications to bathrooms and kitchens to make them more accessible.
- Widening of doorways.
- Installation of ceiling hoists.

3. Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA): This is a specific type of housing designed for participants with extreme functional impairment or very high support needs.

- **What it covers:**

- Funding for the cost of the physical home environment, not the support services received within it. SDA homes are designed to be highly accessible and may include features like reinforced walls, ceiling hoists, and assistive technology integration.

Capacity Building Supports: To Build Skills and Independence

The Capacity Building Supports budget is designed to help participants develop their skills and increase their independence over time. The funding is allocated to specific categories and is generally not transferable between them.

1. Support Coordination: This category provides funding for a Support Coordinator who helps participants to understand and implement their NDIS plan.

- **What it covers:**

- Connecting participants with NDIS providers.
- Helping to negotiate service agreements.
- Resolving issues with providers.
- Preparing for plan reviews.

2. Improved Living Arrangements: This category helps participants to find and maintain appropriate housing.

- **What it covers:**

- Assistance with searching for and applying for rental properties.
- Support to understand and meet tenancy obligations.
- Help with developing household management skills.

3. Increased Social and Community Participation: This category focuses on developing the skills needed to participate in the community.

- **What it covers:**

- Funding for programs that build social skills and confidence.
- Support to join and participate in community groups or clubs.
- Mentoring and peer support.

4. Finding and Keeping a Job: This category provides support for participants to find and maintain employment.

- **What it covers:**

- Employment-related assessment and counselling.
- Support with job searching and resume writing.
- On-the-job training and support.

- School Leaver Employment Supports (SLES) for young people transitioning from school to work.

5. Improved Relationships: This category provides support for participants to develop and maintain positive relationships.

- **What it covers:**

- Specialist behavioural intervention support.
- Therapy to improve social and communication skills.
- Training for carers and families in behaviour management strategies.

6. Improved Health and Wellbeing: This category supports participants to improve their physical and mental health.

- **What it covers:**

- Services from an exercise physiologist or personal trainer.
- Dietary advice from a dietitian.
- Therapeutic supports to manage the impact of a disability on health and wellbeing.

7. Improved Learning: This category provides support for participants to access education and develop new skills.

- **What it covers:**

- Support to transition from school to further education.
- Assistance with enrolling and participating in courses.
- Tutoring and other academic support.

8. Improved Life Choices: This category provides support for participants to manage their NDIS plan and finances.

- **What it covers:**

- **Plan Management:** Funding for a Plan Manager to pay providers and manage the financial aspects of an NDIS plan.
- Financial intermediary services to build financial skills.

9. Improved Daily Living: This is a broad category that funds a wide range of therapeutic, and skill-building supports.

- **What it covers:**

- Therapy services such as occupational therapy, physiotherapy, and speech therapy.
- Early Childhood Intervention for young children.
- Development of daily living and life skills.

10. Behaviour Support: This category provides for the development and implementation of a behaviour support plan for participants who exhibit behaviours of concern.

- **What it covers:**

- Assessment by a behaviour support practitioner.
- Development of a positive behaviour support plan.
- Training for support workers and family members on implementing the plan.

By understanding the distinct purpose of each support category, NDIS participants can work with their planners and support coordinators to create a plan that truly reflects their individual goals and aspirations, paving the way for a more independent and fulfilling life.

Disclaimer

The information provided in the "Detailed Explanation of Each NDIS Support Category" is for general informational purposes only. While we strive to provide accurate and up-to-date information, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a complex and evolving system. Policies, guidelines, and funding criteria are subject to change.

This explanation should not be considered as legal, financial, or professional advice. It is not a substitute for direct advice from the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), a Local Area Coordinator (LAC), a Support Coordinator, a Plan Manager, or another qualified professional.

Individual NDIS plans are based on a person's specific needs, goals, and circumstances as assessed by the NDIA. The inclusion of a support category in this explanation does not guarantee that it will be funded in an individual's NDIS plan. All funding decisions are made by the NDIA based on the reasonable and necessary criteria outlined in the NDIS Act 2013.

For the most current and personalised information, please consult the official NDIS website (ndis.gov.au) or speak directly with an NDIS representative or registered provider.