

The Value of Social Work as a Therapy Support in the NDIS: Capturing the voices of people with an NDIS Plan.

Key dates	The study is open from 8 June 2026 to 29 July 2027
Participants sought	This project is designed to include people who have experience receiving social work as a therapy support funded through the NDIS. Eligibility criteria are intentionally broad to support inclusion, accessibility, and diversity of lived experience. Eligible Participants 1. Age - Adults aged 18 years and over. This ensures participants can legally provide their own consent, or participate with supported decision-making where appropriate. 2. Location -People living anywhere in Australia. This is important because access to NDIS supports and the experience of social work varies across geographic locations. 3. Experience with NDIS Social Work Therapy Supports Participants must: Have an NDIS plan, and Have accessed therapeutic capacity-building support from a qualified social worker during any of their plans. A qualified social worker is defined as someone with a recognised social work degree and who may be eligible for membership with the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW). 4. Relationship to the Person With the NDIS Plan The study includes: People with an NDIS plan who have received social work therapy Family members Carers Supported decision-makers or nominees who can speak to the experience of the person receiving support. This acknowledges shared or supported experiences of service navigation and decision-making. 5. Disability No specific type of disability is required. Participants are not asked but are not required to disclose their disability type. This protects privacy and avoids unnecessary categorisation. This aspect was discussed with the South Australian Council of Intellectual Disability who were clear that we need to ask people to describe their disability rather than offer a series of boxes for them to select. 6. Gender and Cultural Background No restrictions apply. People of all genders, cultural backgrounds, including CALD participants and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, are welcome. This aligns with the study's aim to understand diverse experiences and support inclusive, culturally responsive research. Who is NOT eligible? Participants are not eligible if they:

	Are under 18 Do not live in Australia Have not received social work therapy supports under the NDIS Are receiving help from a professional social worker to complete the survey (to avoid perceived coercion or power imbalance)
About	In There is a significant gap in research in Australian from the voice of National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants regarding the value of social work within their support plan. The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) as the governing body, is currently reviewing the funding model. It is expected that in the future, pricing models will be based on value delivered to participants and outcomes. In social work, we know that many NDIS recipients require complex support in challenging contexts and in this study we aim to understand the value of the social work contribution. This project seeks to capture participant perspectives on the role and impact of social work in their NDIS journey. We will explore how people with an NDIS plan who have accessed therapeutic capacity-building social work support describe the value of this support in their everyday lives. Social work is recognised under the NDIS as an allied health therapy support aimed at building capacity, supporting independence, strengthening emotional wellbeing, and improving social and functional outcomes. Yet little empirical research has captured the lived experiences of people who receive social work services within the NDIS context. This study seeks to address this gap by gathering direct perspectives from people who have used these services. The project uses a mixed-methods design, beginning with an online Qualtrics survey (approximately 10–15 minutes) followed by an optional semi-structured interview (approximately 30 minutes) for participants who wish to share their experiences in more depth. The survey collects information about how participants define “value” in the context of social work support, the areas of life in which they experience benefit, and whether social work engagement affects their use of other services (such as emergency or hospital services). The interview phase deepens this exploration by inviting participants to reflect on the meaning, impact, and perceived usefulness of social work therapy in their daily lives. The study is grounded in value-based care principles, which understand value as outcomes achieved in relation to the supports provided. It also draws on person-centred, rights-based, and social model approaches to disability. Consistent with Sections 1 and 4 of the National Statement (2025), the design emphasises respect for persons, inclusive participation, accessibility, and minimising risks associated with discussing potentially sensitive experiences. Participants are eligible if they are aged 18 or over, live in Australia, and have accessed social work as a therapy support in an NDIS plan. Family members, carers, and supported decision-makers may also participate, in recognition of diverse support relationships. Accessible participation is built into the project: survey questions are written in Easy-English style; participants may receive interview questions beforehand to support processing time. The survey is anonymous, and interview data will be de-identified. Results will be reported in academic publications, conference presentations, and professional learning settings. The overall aim is to amplify the voices of people with lived experience and generate evidence to inform policy, service design, and advocacy regarding the role and value of social work within the NDIS.
What is involved	We are inviting people with an NDIS plan to take part in a research study about the value of social work therapy supports. If you have ever worked with a qualified social worker through your NDIS plan—or if you are a family member, carer, or supported decision-maker—we would like to hear about your experiences.

	The survey takes 10–15 minutes and is anonymous. At the end, you can choose to take part in a 30-minute interview, but this is optional.
How to get involved	Follow the survey link: https://cqu.syd1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4JE1q5u3KBaK3oG
Institution and investigator contact	Ethics approval with CQ University Cate Sherlock from Wellbeing Support Space research@wellbeingsupportspace.com.au 0437 182 282