



10 Powerful Tips to Self Manage Your NDIS Plan

# Taking Control of Your NDIS Plan and 10 Tips for Self Managing

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Disabled people are the experts in our lives, and we should be in charge of our supports and how we live our lives. Self managing my NDIS plan has been the vehicle that put me in control of my life, in the driver's seat. Like driving a car, there are a few rules that you need to follow, and there are some potholes you might want to avoid.

I have been self managing my supports for over 20 years. I can't imagine my life without self management. I have high support needs and it takes a unique and highly individualised approach to help my life run smoothly. It is not something that you can buy off-the-shelf, it is something I have had to create and self management has made that possible.

Drawing on everything I've learned, these are my top tips for taking control of your NDIS funding through self management:

**1. Start small and when you are ready you can increase the percentage of your plan that you self manage.** Starting small will help you find out if self management is right for you. You might begin by self managing 20% of your core funding or just your transport or consumables. You can increase this as you feel more confident and capable.. If you find out it's not your thing, that's fine, you can go back to agency or plan management and at least you know you gave it a go

**2. Think beyond traditional disability services.** While your supports need to be related to your disability, the service that you purchase does not have to be a

disability service. For example, if you need assistance preparing meals, why not pay a meal delivery service? It is likely to cost less and taste better.

**3. Get some help.** You can use your funding to help you to self manage. If you have a support coordinator, ask them to help set you up to self manage. You can access online resources like the **Self Manager Hub**, join the Facebook discussion group or attend the online peer workshops. You can also use your funding to pay for online software that can make self management much easier. I use Xero for payroll and Deputy for rostering.

**4. Set up a cloud-based record-keeping system.** It's 2023 and if you are printing your receipts and putting them into a shoebox, you are no friend to our planet. Hard copies wear out over time and can be difficult to sort through. Take photos of hardcopy receipts and save all your receipts electronically on the cloud. I use Google Drive and you can sort receipts by date which will make them easier to find if you ever get audited. Don't upload them to the NDIS portal – you will never be able to access them that way.

**5. Shop around, save money, find value.** One of the best things about self management is that you can make your funding go further by spending it on things that are good value. If you can find what you need in the mainstream market, it is likely to be more affordable and better value and that's exactly what you can do when you self manage. You are not limited to registered disability providers.

**6. Don't tell providers that you are on the NDIS, if you can avoid it.** There are a lot of providers that charge higher prices to NDIS participants than they do to people who are not on the NDIS. But as a self manager, you can negotiate what you pay for your services, and if you lead a cleaner, a physio or any other service that is offered to the public, there is no reason why they should charge you more, just because you are on the NDIS.

**7. Know the rules.** Read the NDIS self-management guide and make sure you understand the rules. If you use your funding to buy something that might be questionable, make sure you can answer all of the questions on page 8 of the guide. Keep a copy of your answers so that you won't have difficulty explaining your purchase when the time comes for an audit.

**8. If you make a mistake, it's okay.** Learn from it and do better next time. Most of us have made mistakes self managing, especially when starting out. Unknowingly claiming from the wrong category, hiring the wrong person, it happens, and you won't go to jail for it. Fraud is what lands you in trouble. That's when you deliberately claim for things that you didn't buy or are not supposed to claim.

**9. Don't expect other people to decide for you what you can and can't claim.** This is unique to you, you know your situation better than anyone else and you are the person responsible for every claim that you make. So don't expect a stranger in a Facebook group or the NDIS helpline phone operator to make those decisions for you.

**10. Listen to my new podcast episode, *How to get great outcomes from your NDIS plan – A Self-management Deep Dive*.** Sam Paor, CEO Founder of the Growing Space, shares some great examples and advice about how to manage your NDIS funds efficiently, creatively and innovatively so you can get the best outcomes out of your plan. You will also hear from the General Manager in charge of self-management at the NDIA, Sam Bennett.

*Thanks for reading my article, I always appreciate your reactions, comments and shares. You can check out my podcast series and follow me on Twitter @drgeorgethecrip*