



Care for people living with a disability

Nurses, midwives and assistants in nursing recognise that disability can take a variety of forms and affect the physical, mental, sensory, psychological and social ability of the person. Persons with a disability have the right to complete integration and inclusion within the community, family, school and workplace and assistance should be provided for this to take place.^{1,2}

It is the position of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation that:

1. Providing care for people living with a disability may be an important aspect of nursing and midwifery.
2. Nursing and midwifery education programs should prepare all nurses, midwives and assistants in nursing both to assist with care rehabilitation and maintenance of optimal health for the person living with a disability; and for the prevention of disability of persons in their care. These education programs should also provide the nurse, midwife and assistants in nursing with a greater understanding of the problems faced by people living with a disability and their families/ significant others/ or primary carers.
3. Nurses, midwives and assistants in nursing are important members of the health care team assisting people living with a disability. They work in collaboration with the person and their family, as well as with other health professionals and the community to maintain optimal health and independence of the person living with a disability.
4. The role of the nurse, midwife and assistants in nursing includes assisting people living with a disability and their families in all facets of their lives irrespective of their residential or care setting.
5. Nurses, midwives and assistants in nursing use skills and attributes that enhance the quality of life for persons living with a disability and facilitate the desired degree of independence sought by the person and their family.
6. Nurses and midwives use health promotion strategies and take into account the social view of health, placing emphasis on education and participation in the prevention of avoidable disability and the achievement of human potential.
7. Equity in the distribution of health care, aged care and disability resources is supported so that technological improvements and other research outcomes benefit all people living with a disability.
8. Programs are supported which identify and prevent major causes of disability; and which promote integration and acceptance of persons living with a disability.
9. Registered nurses and midwives are encouraged to conduct and participate in research relating to persons living with a disability in order to provide evidence based care.
10. From 2017, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) was implemented across Australia to provide long term, high quality support to people living with a permanent disability that significantly affects their communication, mobility, self-care or self-management. The Scheme should:



- a) focus on intensive early intervention, particularly for people where there is good evidence that it will substantially improve functioning, or delay or lessen a decline in functioning.
 - b) include a comprehensive information and referral service, to assist people living with a disability who need access to mainstream, disability, specialist and community supports and health services.
 - c) ensure those with a disability who have informal supports (carers and family) in place, are supported by the NDIS to maintain these informal supports. NDIS planning needs to consider factors such as carer's illness and ageing to ensure the full burden of support is not left to the informal carer/s.
 - d) give all Australians assurance that they will receive timely and appropriate support if they have or acquire a disability that leaves them needing daily assistance with everyday life, or if they care for someone who has a disability.
11. A transparent monitoring program of the NDIS should be put in place to ensure the main focus of this Scheme is benefit for the people living with a disability, carers and their families.
 12. Nurses, midwives and assistants in nursing support the provision of the most appropriate living options for people living with a disability through the delivery of support models that are person-centred, flexible; allow age related lifestyle choices and social integration opportunities, while promoting an holistic approach to the individual's health care needs.
 13. Health services, aged care and disability services should coordinate and provide information on the range of local resources available to people living with disabilities.
 14. There is a need for a commitment to the development of national policy and the associated resourcing of residential and community aged care services to address the needs of younger people living with a disability.

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References

1. Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia 2010. Available at: <http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines-Statements/Codes-Guidelines.aspx>
2. Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia 2010. Available at: <http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines-Statements/Codes-Guidelines.aspx>