Making a complaint – things to think about

Making a complaint can be daunting. It might help to think about the process before you start.

Use this guide to prepare yourself for what you think and feel, and what steps you might have to take to look after yourself.

Things you might think when you've had a negative experience with your support worker

- I don't know what went wrong or what rules were broken, but I wasn't treated respectfully.
- I feel distressed, angry, confused, sad, numb, or have other feelings, and it's okay to feel like that.
- It might help me if I do some self-soothing strategies. This means doing things that help me feel calmer and safer. Being comfortable is important, especially after my rights have been breached.
- To help me self-soothe, I can listen to music, watch something to distract myself, cuddle my pets, use stim toys, turn off the lights, or do anything else that helps me feel safe.
- After a negative experience, I can take as much time as I need to become comfortable and recharge.
- If it would help, I can talk about my experience with someone I trust.

What to do after my rights are denied

When I feel safe and comfortable, I can start thinking about how I might respond.

I don't have to do anything if I don't want to, but there are ways to take action if I choose to.

If I choose to make a complaint

The word "complaint" sounds scary, but it's okay to complain. Services must meet our rights, and if they don't, we're allowed to file a complaint to ensure it doesn't happen again.

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Funded by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission grants program

NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission

How can I prepare to make a complaint?

When I make a complaint, being clear and specific helps. Here's how I can do it:

- **Start with a summary:** "I'm reaching out because I think my service provider didn't meet my rights."
- **Describe the issue clearly:** "During [specific situation], I felt that [what went wrong or how I was mistreated]."
- **Explain how it affected me:** "This made me feel [e.g., frustrated, upset] because [why it was a problem]."
- **State what I need to happen:** "I would like [what I hope to achieve, e.g., an explanation, an apology, or a change]."
- **If they interrupt me, I can politely ask to continue:** "It's important for me to explain the issue fully. I'd appreciate it if you could let me finish..."
- **If they deflect or avoid the issue, I can redirect to my main concern:** "I understand that [their point], but my main concern is [the specific issue]. Can we focus on that?"
- **Ask for the next steps:** "Can you tell me what will happen next and how you will handle this issue?"

How I make a complaint and to whom I make it depends on my situation

Directly to the Service

If I feel comfortable, I can complain directly to the service that denied my rights.

Most disability and mental health services have their own complaints policy and process.

I can contact the organisation to find out what this policy is and what the process might look like.

I can choose how I would like to make my complaint:

Email: I can write an email to the service provider

Phone: I can call them to discuss my complaint.

In Person: I can arrange a face-to-face meeting to discuss my complaint.

I can bring a trusted person or advocate to support me during the process.

To the NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commission (NDIS Commission):

If an NDIS-funded service denies my rights, I can file a complaint with the NDIS Commission.

They are there to make sure NDIS services meet my rights.

I can also complain to the NDIS Commission about how a service handled my complaint.

When I make a complaint to the NDIS Commission, they will:

- Let me know if they received my complaint.
- Arrange a time to talk to me about my complaint and ask for more information.
- Talk to other people involved in the complaint, including the service.
- Decide the best way to address the complaint.
- Tell me what they decided, why, and what action they will take.

I can learn more about the NDIS Commission by visiting their website: ndiscommission.gov.au

I can also contact them directly:

- **Fill out** their online complaints form.
- **Call** the NDIS Commission on 1800 035 544 (weekdays between 9am and 5pm).
- **Email** the NDIS Commission at contactcentre@ndiscommission.gov.au

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