How we feel about making complaints

Misunderstandings can happen easily. *Navigating My Way* has created this guide to support service providers' understanding of participants and how they feel about making complaints.

- Sometimes we're blunt, but that's just us; we are honest and not trying to be mean.
- We don't always understand your tone of voice, so please don't expect us to interpret it. Be clear with your words and say what you mean.
- Sometimes we don't understand the situation, and we like to have some time with a trusted, impartial person to talk through and process our feelings before we speak to you about it.
- When things go wrong, many of us blame ourselves. We might wonder: Am I overreacting? Did I do something wrong? Is this a legitimate issue?
- A lot of us ruminate on things, replaying the incident over and over in our minds to try to figure out what happened. Because of this, it really helps us if we can resolve issues quickly.
- We get worried about falsely accusing our support worker because we don't always understand the situation.
- There is a power imbalance when we raise issues, which worries us; please be aware.
- Sometimes we can't raise complaints in the moment because we don't want to overreact.
- If you show us that you are open to hearing complaints, it helps us feel confident and safe enough to advocate for our rights and needs.
- When you start working with us, talk to us about the complaints process and provide us with the contact details of who we can complain to.
- Explain to us the boundaries of your job – it helps us understand why you do and don't do things in a certain way. For example, can you keep a gift if we give you one?
- We're complex people. We are not just our needs. We are not just our disabilities.
- Sometimes we don't understand non-verbal interactions, so ensure your communication is upfront and clear.
- Complaint processes are often exhausting. Check in with us to see how things are going. We shouldn't have to do all the work to make things better.

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