



Managing Crisis Calls: Supporting NDIS Participants in Distress

Webinar Summary

Hosted by MyIntegra and presented by Elisa Walther,
Principal Consultant Psychologist, Communicorp.

November 27, 2024.

myintegra



communicorp

Exploring reasons for challenging interactions

Challenging behaviours can occur for various reasons, differing largely from person to person and situation to situation. However, there are many factors that can contribute to the likelihood of these behaviours or reactions occurring.

Common triggers

- Expectations are not met
- Previous negative experiences
- Cumulative stress
- Shame or embarrassment
- Language barriers
- Cultural differences
- Lack of control

Trigger factors

The individual might be:

- Physiologically aroused – from stress, grief, fear
- Naturally more emotionally reactive
- Uncertain/ Feeling a lack of control

The individual might believe:

- The behaviour will get them what they want
- Their information about their situation is true (e.g., that they can debate the validity of their request with you)

The individual might feel:

- Frustrated
- Threatened or ill at ease
- Powerless
- Overwhelmed
- Unheard or misunderstood
- Patronised
- Imposed upon
- Let-down or betrayed

Understanding our reactions

Many factors are outside of your control. However the way you manage the interaction and your ability to self-regulate your own emotions are within your control.

Typical reactions:

- Withdraw
- Defend
- Explain or overexplain
- Over-talk
- problem-solve



Emotional self-regulation

It's important to emotionally regulate entering the interaction, as well as during the interaction.

It may help to 'fake it 'til you make it', e.g., behave as though you already feel a certain way first, to encourage the desired state, feelings or emotions to follow second.

R.A.T.E — how to handle challenging behaviour

Relax and respond

Acknowledge and assert

- Paying attention
- Use verbal nods
- Asking open questions
- Reflecting and clarifying
- Be mindful of tone

Think "is this working?"

Explore solutions, engage help.

- When a person is becoming more aggressive
- Emergency if threats to self, others or property

Know yourself

- What are my triggers?
- What are my capabilities/limits
- How am I feeling?
- How can I manage anticipatory stress?
- How can I find my calm?

Regulation strategies: What can you do?

- Breathe
- Fake it
- Take a break or distract yourself
- Focus on what you can do (locus of control)
- Grounding techniques
- Un-mirroring techniques
- Thought-stopping techniques
- Thought diary/using a sounding board
- Seek positive social support
- Exercise, take the stairs or walk
- Maintain perspective



During the interaction: De-escalation strategies

A.B.C — how to disagree in a respectful way

Agree

- When you share views

Build

- If others leave something out

Compare

- When you differ rather than suggesting they are wrong

Clarifying intent and how to manage misunderstandings

Contrasting statements provides context and proportion which will lessen the chance that someone will make a mountain out of a molehill.

Here's an example of how you could use contrasting to clarify intent:

"I don't want to suggest that... What I do want to do is explain some of the requirements..."


First, address **what you did not intend** and then talk about **what you do intend**.

Structuring the conversation

- Share your facts and reasoning
- Tell your story
- Ask for others' views
- Talk tentatively without watering down
- Encourage testing



Source: 'Crucial Conversations Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High' by Patterson et al.



Managing threats of self-harm or suicide

Threats of self-harm should always be taken seriously. You may want to ease into the conversation softly, and work your way up to more direct questions.

Use clear and direct communication

Example response: "I've noticed you're not yourself lately and am wondering how you are doing... You mentioned that you wish you weren't here. Are you thinking about ending your life?"

Helpful things to say: "I may not be able to understand exactly what you're going through but I care about you and want to help."

Confidentiality

Safety overrides confidentiality. Do not handle a situation alone and seek help from a health professional or emergency services if needed. Remove any risks and do not intervene if it poses a risk to your own safety.

Additional questions: CPRI method

- Current plan: Have they put a plan in place?
- Past attempts: Have they tried in the past?
- Resources: Have they got access to the resources to take action on the attempt?
- Intoxication and impulsivity: Is this person acting in an intoxicated or impulsive manner?

External supports

- Your General Practitioner
- Beyond Blue – 1300 22 4636
- Headspace – 1800 650 890
- Lifeline – 13 11 14
- LGBTQI Hotline (Q life) – 1800 184 527
- Family Violence Hotline – 1800 RESPECT
- Men's Line Australia - 1300 78 99 78
- Suicide Call Back Service - 1300 659 467
- 13YARN- 13 92 76 – Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders crisis support line

External resources

- Emergency Services
- Mental Health Services



Practicing good boundary management



Know the key purpose and goals of your work

- Accept the varying factors we don't have control of or can't influence
- Understanding that sometimes the outcome will be negative or unsatisfactory
- Be aware of unsustainable work practices and committed to your own self-care by creating non-negotiable self-care routine



Recovery

- Acknowledge the achievement of getting through the incident
- Allow time to recollect thoughts
- Take action to ground yourself



Healthy debriefing

- Ask a colleague before you start venting if, and when they have time for a conversation — do this in private to minimise distraction or impact on others
- Set up team agreements for healthy venting
- Balance the negative with the positive of the situation
- Focus on reflecting on how you are going and what you need, rather than what was disclosed to you
- Spend time coming up with solutions (where appropriate)

Practices for everyday emotional management



Care for your physical needs:
Ensure you sleep, move, eat, and attend to and rest when unwell.



Honest chats:
Talking with your supports to vent and engage in constructive exploration and problem solving.



Sensory activities:
To support mindfulness and provide pleasure — e.g cooking, music, nature, gardening etc.



Compassionate phrases:
Using compassionate phrases in self-talk like, “this too shall pass.”



Check-in with yourself:
Regular emotional ‘temperature checks’, mindfulness exercises, journaling, expressive art.

How do we top up our energy?

To maintain our energy, we need to ensure we make time to invest in ourselves across all four domains:

Spiritual

- Connect with your faith/beliefs
- Help someone
- ‘Stop to smell the roses’ and appreciate the little things in life
- Connect daily actions to a greater sense of purpose and meaning

Physical

- Do something physical every day
- Take small leave or breaks regularly
- Make time for rest and relaxation

Emotional

- Make time for authentic emotional expression
- Build a positive portfolio
- Call a friend
- Take a break from things and people that bring you down

Mental

- Learn something new
- Know your energy levels
- Break a routine or invent a new ritual

MyIntegra Plan Management Services

With the right plan manager
by your side, **your NDIS journey**
gets a whole lot easier.

MyIntegra's Plan Management service can take care of the paperwork, pay invoices on time and give practical advice and assistance to ensure your NDIS participant's plan works best for them.

**Scan the QR code to sign up
or refer your participant:**



T: 1300 769 608

SMS: 0480 028 824

E: choiceandcontrol@myintegra.com.au

W: myintegra.com.au

**Understand the cost of supports with
our **NDIS Budget Calculator**.**

The MyIntegra NDIS Budget Calculator can help you figure out how much different supports and services will cost according to the NDIS price guide.

What's to love about our calculator?

- Can help to build Myplace & PACE budgets
- Location specific information
- Search by name or line-item no.
- Free of charge
- Private and downloadable
- Can be used for planning or plan reassessments