QuickGuide

What *really* helps? The difference between transformational and transactional benefits

Introduction

There are lots of conversations about how best to help people. For example, the NDIS is part of Australia's conversation about how best to help people. It started with a consultation report called *Shut Out*, which showed the many problems faced by people living with disability that left them missing out on things that most Australians take for granted. That report led to the National Disability Strategy, and the NDIS is part of that strategy.

The NDIS is there to help people. But how do we know what good help looks like?

This QuickGuide is written to help peer networks talk about this, so that peer network members can look at how the supports they receive can be as helpful as possible.

This QuickGuide offers a way to think about two types of helpfulness. One is called *Transactional Benefits*, and the other is called *Transformational Benefits*.

Let's make it happen

So let's talk about what these two different types of helpfulness are.

Transactional Benefits

Transactional Benefits are the types of helpfulness that happen only at the time they are delivered. For example, transactional benefits can be things like someone showing up on time and helping a person with personal care, or preparing a meal, or vacuuming the carpet. These are important, and they need to be done well, but soon they will vanish and need to be replaced; the person will need personal assistance again, they will be hungry and need a meal again, and the carpet will become messy again.

Many people living with disability will need this type of helpfulness. For some people living with disability, it may be all they need.

Transformational Benefits

Transformational Benefits are the types of helpfulness that make a much bigger positive difference to the person's chances of a good life. As a result of this helpfulness, the person may have new skills, new connections, new opportunities. As such, this type of helpfulness is an investment in the person.

The difference between the two

Let's start with the old saying, '*if you give a person a fish you feed them for a day; if you teach a person to fish you feed them for a lifetime*'. Giving a person a fish to eat is a Transactional Benefit. Teaching a person to fish is a Transformational Benefit, because it has a long-lasting impact on their chances of a good life.

Not everyone eats fish, but you get the point. Let's now think about something more universal, like education.

When a child goes to school, the Transactional Benefits will include will include things like, 'something for the child to do that day', 'a fun place to go' (hopefully), 'keeping kids safe and off the streets', and 'a way for the child's parents/carers to be able to go and do other things'.

The Transformational Benefits of the child going to school will be things like, 'the child tuning in to their own identity, strengths and gifts, ' the child learning things that will help them transition to a meaningful adult life', 'developing a lifelong love of learning', and 'learning about relationships and building friendships'.

For a person living with disability, Transformational Benefits will include help to find proper paid work, help to learn new skills, help to build new friendships and connections, help to build self-belief in what's possible.

Transformational Benefits and the NDIS

The NDIS is there to help Australians living with disability to build their chances of a good life. The NDIS is about 'participation in community life and the economy', the opposite of being *shut out*.

If the NDIS only focused on giving people Transactional Benefits, then there would be a risk that everyone is getting more reliable supports than they were before, but they are still shut out. Someone showing up on time to help a person with personal care at home does not automatically mean that person is going to become a valued member of their local community.

Peer networks can help people to think about the benefits they want from the NDIS, and how to ask for these.

Ideas for peer network conversations

Here are some ways your peer network can have a conversation about Transactional and Transformational Benefits:

- What types of Transactional Benefits and Transformational Benefits do individual members want/ Are these in their current support arrangements?
- What ways could people ask for Transactional Benefits in their supports? How could we get it into a person's NDIS plan, and how could we make sure the support provider does it?
- What types of help do people know about that seem to bring Transformational Benefits? This might include approaches like Circles of Support, good employment pathways, inclusive schools, Microenterprise, etc You can find out about some of these in other QuickGuides
- Are there other ways people can find Transformational Benefits in their lives? This could include getting to know the neighbours, joining a local club, volunteering, and so on.

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- Which support providers have the best reputations for Transformational Benefits? What do we think makes them good at this?

A peer network conversation like this can help peer network members think about the types of support that will truly be helpful to their lives.

The conversation could also help the peer network use its collective voice to demand a fairer go at more Transformational Benefits.

Where you can find more information

Purple Orange has been involved in a number of conversations about Transformational Benefits. Get in touch with them if you and your peer network would like to explore this topic some more.

See the Purple Orange website www.purpleorange.org.au

You may also be interested in Purple Orange's Model of Citizenhood Support. This talks about something called the *Four Capitals*, which are four ways of thinking about Transformational Benefits.

Go to www.purpleorange.org.au to download a copy of the book, or ring 08 8373 8333.

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