

Adult Autism Services Core Module 2 – Governance and Operational Management Emergency and Disaster Management

Note: For the purposes of this document Adult Autism Services will be referred to by the acronym AAS

Policy

Purpose

The purpose of the Emergency and Disaster Management Policy and Procedure is so our participants feel safe in the event of a disaster (natural or pandemic); knowing Adult Autism Services will provide them with continuity of service. Adult Autism Services focuses on maintaining service delivery to our participants in times of stress and uncertainty.

Though disasters and emergencies may be infrequent, we acknowledge our services are especially important before, during, and after such events, as many participants are beyond the reach of other services, and Adult Autism Services provides them with an essential support lifeline.

Adult Autism Services recognises that preparedness for disasters and emergencies is a priority for our organisation and a requirement to ensure the safety of our participants.

Adult Autism Services will endeavour to provide adequate service to our participants before, during, and after emergencies.

Emergency and disaster management includes planning that:

- Ensures that the risks to the health, safety and wellbeing of participants that may arise in an emergency or disaster are considered and mitigated.
- Ensures the continuity of supports critical to the health, safety, and wellbeing of participants in an emergency or disaster.
- Stay informed regarding all state/territory and federal government directives and act upon these directives appropriately.
- Advise other organisations who work with Adult Autism Services of our disaster procedures and processes and the actions we undertake in an event of these.

- Identify personnel who are critical in the delivery of essential frontline services.
- Train staff in the implementation of any strategies to ensure Participant Emergency Plan explain and guide how Adult Autism Services will respond to and oversee the response to an emergency or disaster.
- Implement this policy in conjunction with our Risk Management Policy and Procedure, our Information Management Policy and Procedure and our Human Resource Policy and Procedure.
- Review the Participant Emergency Plan in consultation with the participant and relevant support networks during the annual risk assessment of the support plan review to enable adjustments due to the changing nature of any disaster or emergency.

Some types of disasters that AAS can plan for include the following:

- Covid-19 Pandemic or other infectious disease outbreaks
- Power outages
- Natural disasters e.g., Floods, bushfires etc.
- Cyber attack

Environmental

- Building disaster
- Campus disaster
- City wide disaster
- Regional disaster
- National disaster

These may include flood, fire, heatwave, snowstorm, storms or cyclones and pandemics.

Procedures

Definition of an Emergency or Disaster

A disaster is any phenomenon, natural or human-made, that has the potential to cause extensive destruction of life and property. An emergency is a grave risk to health, life, or the environment. The mere mention of either of these two words makes the community, particularly our participants, extremely nervous. Having all parties know and understand the plan is the key to being ready for any disaster. Our

organisation management will consult with participants, support networks, and staff to periodically review plans, so their management is relevant to the current situation.

AAS will address the following components of a disaster management plan; prepare, prevent, manage, and respond.

Prepare:

(a) Program restructure:

The current program may require restructuring to maintain the safety of support staff and participants during an emergency or disaster. The type of restructure will be dependent of the identified risks of the emergency or disaster. Program restructure may include;

- Small pod structures or “bubbles” to maintain distancing between groups.
- Shift from centre-based program to home based programs for participants.
- Shift from centre-based program to community-based programs for participants.
- Increase in group sizes to provide additional availability of support staff.

(b) Personal protective equipment:

Personal protective equipment is ready and available including but not limited to:

- Masks
- Hand sanitiser
- Disinfectant wipes and sprays
- Face shields
- Administration officer to keep a record of supplies that are running low, and order as required.

(c) Infection control

Staff are to ensure all site facilities are cleaned thoroughly at the end of each day and during the day as required.

Prevent:

(a) Risk of harm assessment (participants)

An individual risk assessment for each participant should be completed by support workers and therapists to identify any risks posed to them.

Participant name:	Individual risk assessment:	Proactive and reactive strategies
E.g. John	E.g. Epilepsy, absconding	- E.g. Staff training in Epilepsy management

Manage:

(a) Participant communication

Support staff to communicate changes to routine and expectations to participants. Examples may come in the form of social stories, changes to daily schedules, video and staff modelling of expectations, development of reinforcement systems to help teach appropriate skills etc.

Examples of resources may include:

- Forewarning for mask wearing.
- Covid vaccination (“Covid scratch”) visual forewarning
- Visual sequences onsite for hand washing
- Social stories for isolation and social distancing

(b) Parent and staff communication

Parents/ guardians and staff will be communicated of any impacting changes and response plans as required. Communication should occur on a regular basis through a variety of means including emails, phone calls and meetings where appropriate.

(c) Service agreements

Changes to service agreements to be made if reasonable and necessary and with the consent of both parties.

(d) Seek assistance

AAS can draw on assistance from the Giant Steps school for the sharing and allocation of resources such as;

- More access to vehicles
- Access to Giant Steps school support staff and therapists
- Assistance from Giant Steps leadership team
- Access to the Giant Steps school site

Respond:

AAS management will follow the below structure when responding to emergency and disasters;

1. Identify
2. Implement
3. Notify
4. Document
5. Seek assistance
6. Monitor

Applicability

When?

- Applies when preparing the organisation for a pandemic.
- Applies when undertaking any organisational activities during a pandemic.

Who?

- Applies to all workers at every level of the organisation.

Further resources available at:

- Covid -19: <https://www.nds.org.au/covid-19-hub>
- Bushfire information and support: <https://www.nds.org.au/resources/bushfire-information-and-support>
- Disaster assist: <https://www.disasterassist.gov.au/>

Supporting or Relevant Legislation

Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Commonwealth)


Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)

Disability Services Act 1986 (Commonwealth)

NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2021

National Disability Insurance Scheme (Provider Registration and Practice Standards)
Amendment (2021 Measures No. 1) Rules 2021

<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2021L01480>

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