

## **Deconstructing our Ways of Working - Functional Assessments for Disability Services**

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### **Background: (70 words)**

People with comorbid functional disabilities and substance use disorders experience increased vulnerability and risk of harm. Public Drug & Alcohol Services are not routinely equipped for Functional Assessment, with very few OT positions across NSW Health Drug and Alcohol Services. Challenges associated with accessing disability services is a widely felt challenge. This project aims to optimise the response to this complex client group and prevent deterioration, hospitalisation and treatment disengagement.

### **Description of Intervention: (35 words)**

Education and new processes have enabled multidisciplinary clinicians across SESLHD DAS to conduct functional assessments and extend practice scope, supporting successful NDIS applications and access decisions that may not have been otherwise possible.

### **Effectiveness/Acceptability/Implementation: (31 words)**

Initial engagement with targeted clinicians is high. Resistance is likely during service wide implementation. Although, it is expected that clinicians will view functional assessments as a way forward for this complex, high risk client group. Clinician engagement will be measured during project implementation.

### **Conclusion and Next Steps: (44 words)**

Functional Assessments completed by multidisciplinary teams increased the likelihood of people accessing the NDIS, resulting in improvements in physical health, mental health and quality of life measures. Initial findings suggest that involvement with disability services reduces healthcare costs, improves patient outcomes and experience.

### **Implications for Practice or Policy: (46 words)**

This new approach to functional assessment and NDIS access warrants further examination, particularly for those with substance use disorders experiencing early ageing. The model is transferable to other Drug & Alcohol Services, including those with limited resources or serving hard-to-reach population

### **Disclosure of Interest Statement: Nil**