

Welcome to the MH-NDIS Project Updates!

We are excited to keep you connected with the latest research activities and invite you to explore opportunities to participate. Please feel free to share these updates with your networks. If you'd like to stay informed, simply email us to subscribe and receive regular updates directly to your email inbox.

We look forward to staying in touch with you.

Kind regards,
The MH-NDIS Research Team

Fixing the NDIS for People with Psychosocial Disability

This five-year project (2024-2029) funded by the Australian Research Council Industry Laureate Fellowship aims to address serious deficits in the operation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) for one of its largest participant groups: people with psychosocial disability.

This project will develop new data on scheme outcomes, cost-effectiveness and participant and stakeholder experiences to improve supports for this group. It will also provide data to improve the provision of supports for people with serious mental illness outside of the NDIS.

The research team is led by Professor Jennifer Smith-Merry and include three Postdoctoral Research Fellows Dr Jade Chang (health economist), Dr Joel Hollier (qualitative methods), Dr Firew Bobo (epidemiologist), Matthew Jackman (PhD student, lived experience activist), Wayne Wright (First Nations Community Researcher) and Research Project Coordinator Dr Ivy Yen. The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) is the project partner. The NDIA supports data linkage and prioritisation of project activities. Our project provides analysis to the NDIA and other government agencies to improve the NDIS and mental health supports more broadly.



Project activities

Work completed to date:

- Systematic review of the key learnings from peer-reviewed Partners in Recovery literature; the most evaluated Australian national psychosocial program for people with severe mental illness
- Data access to relevant national datasets (such as those provided by the ABS) to understand this population and their trajectories both within and outside of the NDIS.
- Media analysis of the implication of changing media debates about the cost of the NDIS.
- Scoping review of the implementation of community-based psychosocial interventions for adults with severe mental illness in high-income countries.

Work currently being undertaken:

- Systematic review of psychosocial supports to inform the development of the next phase of the NDIS, including the 'early intervention' program mentioned in the 2023 NDIS Review, and targeted foundational supports outside of the NDIS.
- Interviews focusing on the NDIS and people with psychosocial disability in forensic settings
- Understanding the origins and usage of the term 'psychosocial disability'
- Data Linkage and Analysis – linking data from various government agencies (e.g., NDIS, ABS, Department of Health and Aged Care, and state inpatient datasets) to identify individuals with psychosocial disability and examine socioeconomic and geographic inequities in access to the NDIS and related outcomes.

- Participant and carer interviews to understand their needs, experiences and expectations of NDIS involvement.
- Interviews with stakeholders reflecting on the operation of the NDIS and expectations of early intervention approach (as mentioned in the 2023 NDIS review) and foundational supports.
- Scoping review of disparities in health and support services for Australians with disability.

Work currently in development:

- A national survey to understand public perspectives on proposed changes and reforms to the NDIS for people with mental health challenges.
- A discrete choice experiment to quantify the attributes of key support workers most valued by individuals with mental health challenges.
- Interviews with people with psychosocial disability not currently receiving the NDIS
- A quantitative analysis of NDIS market dynamics and regional disparities.
- Cost-effectiveness of supported employment programs for people with psychosocial disability: An economic modelling.

Connecting with the academic community

- Dr Joel Hollier attended the Global Disability Summit in Berlin hosted by the International Disability Alliance on 2-3 April 2025.
- Professor Jennifer Smith-Merry and Dr Joel Hollier will be presenting at the International Public Policy Association Conference in Thailand on 2-4 July 2025.
- Dr Jade Chang will be presenting at the 2025 International Health Economics Association Congress in Indonesia on 19-23 July 2025.
- Professor Jennifer Smith-Merry will be giving a keynote presentation and Dr Joel Hollier will be presenting at the Australian Psychosis Conference in Brisbane on 29-30 July 2025.

Opportunities to be involved

Ongoing conversations are key to the success and relevance of our project. We are keen to involve people with severe mental illness/psychosocial disability (both NDIS participants and those who are not), carers, community members, service providers, advocates, policy makers and other experts.

Participation in interviews: ongoing throughout the project. If you are interested, you can use [this link here](#) . Get in touch with Dr Joel Hollier if you want more information: joel.hollier@sydney.edu.au

Stakeholder consultations on topics of key importance to the project:

- Roundtables e.g. Early intervention pathway and the NDIS roundtable, 21 June 2024
- Core project advisory group, quarterly meetings – ongoing
- Aboriginal community consultations – run by Wayne Wright (project First Nations Community Researcher). Contact Wayne for further information: wayne.wright@sydney.edu.au
- Team visits, community discussions and presentations. *Our team are available to come and speak to community groups, government departments and academic research teams. Contact Jen for further information: jennifer.smith-merry@sydney.edu.au*

For more information: mh-ndis.project@sydney.edu.au