



# Setting True North: Evaluation of the Individualised Supported Living Professional Development Program.

Research Report

2023

A R A L U E N



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This research project was conducted as a collaboration between the University of Melbourne, Araluen, and Able Australia.

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## Glossary

**Exploration and Design:** An NDIA-funded line item that participants can use to engage a provider to work out where to live and how to be supported.

**Home and Living:** The types of home and living supports that the NDIS can fund including Individualised living options.

**Individualised Living Options:** Support for NDIS participants to live in a way that is suited to the individual.

**Individualised Supported Living (ISL):** ISL is a philosophy and research-informed framework to support people with disability realise their goals for community living. ISL helps people think about what they want and need to have in place to ensure a quality and sustainable home and community living option. The ISL framework asks people to think about eight areas (called ISL Themes) that research has shown are important to be considered before a person establishes a home in the community. These same 8 themes and their supporting 'attributes' can be used after a person has established their ISL, to evaluate how their ISL is going and what needs to be done to sustain and improve their ISL.

**Individual Supported Living Manual 2<sup>nd</sup> edition:** A planning tool that uses qualitative and quantitative techniques and allows for the inclusion of the voice of persons with disabilities in the planning, development and review of their living arrangements.

## Acronyms

**ILO:** Individualised Living Options

**ISL:** Individual/ised Supported Living

**NDIA:** National Disability Insurance Agency

**NDIS:** National Disability Insurance Scheme

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## Executive Summary

People with disabilities can receive funding through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) to support 'Individualised living options' (ILO) (National Disability Insurance Agency, 2022). The ILO policy and funding arrangements uphold the rights of people with disabilities to choose where and with whom they want to live. These policy and funding arrangements support people to explore and design their own living arrangement and then to establish the supports they need to live the life they choose; and as a consequence, no longer need to rely on living long-term with their parents, or in congregate care in a group-home. Consistent with this policy, the Individualised Supported Living (ISL) framework (Cocks, Thoresen, McVilly, & O'Brien, 2017; Cocks et al., 2016; McVilly et al., 2017) is a research-based evidence-informed tool, grounded in person-centred approaches that has been developed to investigate and improve the quality and sustainability of individualised living arrangements over time (Cocks & Thoresen, 2017).

Using the ISL framework, the University of Melbourne in partnership with Araluen and Able Australia undertook the development and evaluation of an ISL professional development program. The ISL professional development program was designed to equip disability service professionals with foundational knowledge of individualised supported living options and the capabilities to begin the process of undertaking an ISL evaluation specifically focused on the needs and aspirations of persons with intellectual disabilities.

The ISL program was designed in consultation with a Higher Education curriculum designer, and was delivered through a mix of interactive seminars, pre-recorded lectures, and self-paced readings, videos, and activities. The course was designed with the goal to build participants understanding and capability to apply foundational principles and practices of the ISL framework. Activities and assessments were designed to develop participants' leadership capabilities as they worked with their peers, clients, and client networks to provide, evaluate, document, and report Individualised Supported Living arrangements, or the aspirations and plans for such arrangements for an identified person.

In terms of real-world outcomes, the ISL process is designed to enable a person supported by their immediate network to develop an understanding of what they are looking for in a home of their own and what they need to do to achieve their vision. This information in turn can support the person in an application to the NDIS to secure reasonable and necessary resources to achieve their vision. Following from this, the ISL framework should continue to provide the individual with a means to track their own progress, to identify where they are achieving and where adjustments or additional resources might be required. The results can be used to inform the subsequent reviews of a person's NDIS plan.

The professional development program, though not yet accredited, was designed to meet academic standards of a *micro-credential*. Micro-credentials are discrete pieces of formally assessed learning offered by a higher education provider (a university) that can be combined with other accredited professional development opportunities over time to work towards a certificate, diploma or degree level qualification. Thus, they both equip learners with knowledge and skills relevant to their immediate work situation and at the same time prepare them for future learning and the pursuit of higher recognised qualifications (Boud & Falchikov, 2006). At the University of Melbourne, a *Melbourne Micro-cert* is usually accredited as the equivalent of 25% of a masters-by-coursework subject (AQF Level 9).

The University of Melbourne Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) approved research to evaluate the training program. The evaluation was undertaken using an adapted version of Kirkpatrick's framework (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006). The framework breaks down analysis to four levels: learner reaction, learning (including the acquisition of knowledge and skill), transfer or application of the learning to practice, and results / impact of the participant's learning on their work. Level one is foundational to ensure the effectiveness of the other levels. Each level contributes data to inform subsequent levels of evaluation and can be used for continual improvement of a learning program through the reflection on participant reactions to the learning experience. The evaluation model can then be used to build a business case based on identified value or benefits of the training to both learners and those with whom they work.

To facilitate the research and evaluation, pre and post interviews were conducted with learners to assess knowledge acquisition. Furthermore, post interviews were conducted with NDIS participants who had their living arrangement evaluated by learners to assess real world impact of the learners' new knowledge and skills. Also,

field notes were taken by the researchers throughout the program to support reflective practice as both designers and deliverers of the program.

Overall, the participants were satisfied with the training and indicated they would recommend it to others. They were able to demonstrate the acquisition of new knowledge and skills and better use their existing experience and capabilities in the area of ISL. They were able to take what they learnt in theory and to successfully apply it to work with their clients, and there were emerging positive outcomes for clients within the time constraints surrounding the project.

Based on the findings of the evaluation the following recommendations are made:

- Convene a working group to co-create the next iteration of the course, incorporating learnings from the current evaluation.
- Test the revised version of the course at scale, allowing for stratification of both service providers and clients across a range of experiences and circumstances.
- Develop the course into an accredited micro-credential.
- Collaborate with the NDIA to develop a framework to align the ISL training program and micro-credential to home and living supports and to the workforce capability framework.
- Develop a version of the micro-credential that could be undertaken by family members and people with disability, empowering them to take charge of the ISL process to the extent they would like.

## Introduction

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) states that “Persons with disabilities have the opportunity to choose their place of residence and where and with whom they live” (Article 19) (United Nations, 2006). This exercise of choice and control with respect to living arrangements is recognised in the National Disability Insurance Agency’s Home and Living Policy, and in particular in the policy and funding provisions for Individualised Living Options (ILO) (National Disability Insurance Agency, 2022).

For people with disabilities to realise their rights to ‘choice and control’ over where and with whom they live, and their ambitions for individualised living options, there needs to be a knowledgeable, skilled, and capable workforce to work alongside people with disabilities. Here it is expected that the disability sector workforce will double from 270,000 in 2020 to an estimated 353,000 by 2024, resulting in the creation of 1 in five new jobs in Australia (Department of Social Services, 2021). Consequently, there is an urgent need for professional development programs to support these objectives and for such professional development opportunities to be available for delivery at scale.

For these purposes, the development of a capable workforce is considered an imperative to support the objectives and success of the NDIS. Improving formal qualifications for the sector and the provision of formal training that is responsive, agile and adaptable to evolving sector needs has been identified as an important strategy that will support the NDIS workforce (Department of Social Services, 2019). To these ends, the NDIS workforce capability framework was developed to guide the attitudes, skills and knowledge required of the NDIS workforce (NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, 2021).

The ISL professional development program was designed with current NDIS policy priorities in mind; to equip disability service professionals with foundational knowledge of Individualised Supported Living (ISL), together with the skills and capabilities to put into effect the NDIS ‘Individualised living options’ (ILO) policy (National Disability Insurance Agency, 2022). It was designed to deliver evidence-informed professional development in a flexible multi-element learning environment that combined self-paced learning activities, real-time on-line peer discussion, and workplace assignments to consolidate and extend learning. Its development is in alignment with the NDIS National Workforce Plan 2021-2025, Priority Action 2: “Train and support the NDIS workforce to support retention and meet the needs of NDIS participants” (page 22). The intention to transition the short course to a Micro-credential is also in alignment with the NDIS Workforce Plan which calls for ‘a stronger learning system and culture for NDIS workers’, and which calls for the development of accredited micro-credentials that will enable upskilling and, over time, build towards a recognised accredited qualifications for the NDIS workforce (page 26).

### How was the original ISL framework developed and tested?

By way of background to the current ISL professional development program, an Australian Research Council funded project evaluated the use of the Individualised Supported Living (ISL) Framework that was subsequently found to be a valid and reliable tool to evaluate the quality of an individual living arrangement for persons with intellectual disabilities (Cocks et al., 2017). This tool showed promise as a planning tool that used qualitative and quantitative techniques and allowed for the inclusion of the voice of persons with disabilities in the planning, development and review of their living arrangements.

The ISL framework is based on three assumptions firstly; with the right support, any person can reside in an individualised living arrangement. Secondly; people do not have to live with other people with disability or any person with whom they have not chosen to share a home. Thirdly; people who live in an ISL arrangement do not have to live alone.

The ISL framework has allowed for ‘individualised living’ to be conceptualised from the perspectives of persons with disability and their supporters. It consists of 8 themes and 21 attributes as shown in Table 1. The ISL framework, consistent with Article 19 of the UNCRPD, promotes individual choice and self-determination for persons with intellectual disability in the pursuit of their right to live independently and be included in the community. The ISL manual can also be used to improve the quality and sustainability of the person’s preferred



arrangement over time, by conducting a structured evaluation and documenting progress. Table 1 describes the themes and attributes of a quality living arrangement, as established by (Cocks et al., 2016; McVilly et al., 2017).

**Table 1: ISL themes and attributes**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Attributes</b>
<b>1. Leadership</b>	1.1 The arrangement is based on a clear vision and strong ideas. 1.2 Key people provide the leadership to set up and continue the arrangement.
<b>2. My home</b>	2.1 The person has secure tenure in the home. 2.2 The person does normal things that people do in their homes. 2.3 The person's home reflects who the person is and what he or she likes.
<b>3. One Person at a Time</b>	3.1 The arrangement is developed around the person. 3.2 The living arrangement does not group persons with disabilities.
<b>4. Planning</b>	4.1 Planning focuses on the person. 4.2 People close to the person are involved in planning. 4.3 The person's future is central to planning.
<b>5. Control</b>	5.1 The person and those close to him or her (if appropriate) have control over the person's life. 5.2 Self-determination for the person is central to the arrangement. 5.3 The person and those close to him or her (if appropriate) have control over the arrangement.
<b>6. Support</b>	6.1 Supports are flexible and adapt to changes in the person's needs. 6.2 A variety of supports are in place that suit the person.
<b>7. Thriving</b>	7.1 The person's lifestyle and wellbeing are improving. 7.2 The person has valued roles. 7.3 There are many opportunities for growth and development.
<b>8. Social Inclusion</b>	8.1 The person has close and long-lasting relationships. 8.2 The person has a rich social network. 8.3 The person takes part in the community.

The ISL manual which supports the framework was developed over three stages (Cocks & Thoresen, 2017). The first stage explored the characteristics and outcomes of established ISL arrangements for people who had the right amount of support to live in their own home. This stage employed a number of research activities including a review of the literature, focus groups, surveys and the close observation of 6 ISL arrangements, each over 18 months. This led to the development of themes that made up an ISL arrangement. The second stage of the project was conducted to further develop and refine the ISL framework and manual through workshops. After which the

first version of the ISL manual and review scoring booklet was published (Cocks & Boaden, 2011; Cocks, Thoresen, Williamson, & Boaden, 2014). The third stage of the ISL project was the Australian Research Council linkages project that enabled a large-scale evaluation of ISL arrangements across Western Australia, New South Wales, and Victoria.

This third stage was led by Curtin University, The University of Sydney and The University of Melbourne. The third stage of the project allowed for teams comprising disability support practitioners to be trained to evaluate ISL arrangements. This allowed for the evaluation of 130 ISL arrangements across three states, further refinement of the manual and the publication of a second edition (Cocks & Thoresen, 2017). Results from the third stage of the project found the ISL framework and manual to be a valid and reliable measure.

The earlier ARC funded project found four types of ISL arrangements to exist. All were characterised by people with disability using a full range of supports to live in their own *home*. The first was *living alone*; whereby people with disability lived in their own home and used a full range of supports. The second was *co-residency*; whereby adults with disabilities had their own home and lived with other people/persons whereby mutually agreed arrangements for the provision of support provided were developed in exchange for reduced rent or other agreed on and negotiated conditions. The third was *relationships*; where people were in genuine relationships based on choice such as marriage or existing intimate relationships; and lastly *host family*, characterised by a person with disability living with another family with whom they were not related but with whom they had a genuine personal relationship.

### **How does the ISL framework align with the NDIS ILO policy?**

The NDIS has identified a range of supports that can be made available to NDIS participants with respect to their living arrangements. These include personal care supports, home modifications, short- and medium-term transitional accommodation, Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA), and Supported Independent Living (SIL). Importantly, recent policy developments are geared towards enabling people to pursue Individualised Living Options (ILO). ILO is designed to enable people to have greater say in where they live, if they wish to share their home with someone, and if so with whom they might share their home. This policy represents a substantial shift in thinking where previously people might have been reliant on long-term living with their parents or moving into congregate care in the form of a group home with other people who might not have been of their choosing.

An ILO is established in two main phases. In the first phase, the person is supported to explore their aspirations and options. With support of their network and a planner they together design their ideal ILO. As part of this process, they decide where they want to live and if they want someone else to share their home, and if so under what circumstances. In the second phase the person is supported to establish a plan or service proposal that will enable them to achieve their goals, including identifying the naturally occurring supports they already have (from family and friends) and the supports they would like to have funded by the NDIS to help establish and sustain their ILO arrangement.

The ISL framework provides a research informed process to facilitate the conversations and planning involved in the establishment of an ILO. The ISL framework can be used to guide the conversation to ensure all relevant matters are discussed. It can be used to document what supports a person currently has in place and what supports they need to fully realise their ILO goals, establishing what is referred to by the NDIS as an individualised *Roadmap*; i.e., a practical guide to how an individual might work towards and achieve an individual home and living option. Furthermore, the ISL framework and the associated documentation can be used when later reflecting progress prior to a NDIS plan review, to evaluate the success of the existing plan, and subsequently assist in the formulation and funding of a revised plan.

**Table 2. Alignment between NDIS ILO supported activities and the ISL framework**

<b>NDIS ILO supported (funded) activities</b>	<b>Examples of alignment with ISL themes</b>
Help with making decisions like where you want to live and what supports you need to make that happen	Theme 1: leadership, Theme 5: Control
Personal care, including help to shop, cook or pay bills	Theme 6: Support
Help to set up and manage your own home	Theme 3: One person at a time
Help to build your independence	Theme 7: Thriving
Building and maintaining connection with others	Theme 8: Social inclusion
Help with making day to day decisions	Theme 5: Control
Support to manage your emotions or behaviour	Theme 6 Support, Theme 7 Thriving
Unpaid volunteers, neighbours or carers who help you on a regular basis	Theme 6: Support, Theme 7: Thriving
People who you call to help you when you need it (on-call)	Theme 4: Planning
Training for the people who support you.	Theme 6: Support

### **What did the current professional development program consist of and what were the intended project outcomes?**

The ISL professional development program was developed for experienced disability support professionals who wanted to upskill to provide support to clients to progress what is referred to in NDIS policy as Individualised Living Options (ILO). It was particularly pitched to mid-level and more senior managers in leadership roles seeking specialist knowledge to guide and support ILO processes.

The program was structured to build participant capabilities to:

1. Identify ISL principles and practices that support quality and sustainable personalised service provision to benefit National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants consistent with ILO policy.
2. Demonstrate and model beneficial leadership competencies including complex problem solving, active listening, and communication skills to support client autonomy and foster greater respect for diversity.
3. Work collaboratively with NDIS participants, families, and informal supports using open communication and enabling conditions for shared perspectives to undertake planning for and evaluation of an ILO arrangement using the ISL Framework that demonstrates sustainable practices.
4. Critically evaluate ILO arrangements using the ISL Framework and collaborate with experienced disability support professionals to identify and manage potential future challenges.

It was designed for flexible delivery; online or in mixed mode (face-to-face and online, sometimes referred to as 'Blended Synchronous Learning'). Participants were expected to complete all modules and attend 8 weekly 90-minute seminars. Participants were offered support and guidance throughout as they undertook their own research and reading relevant to the course content.

Delivered through interactive seminars, pre-recorded lectures, and self-paced readings, videos, and activities, the ISL professional development program was designed to help participants understand and apply foundational principles and practices of the ISL method/framework developed for the Australian disability service sector context. Activities and assessments were designed to develop participants' leadership capabilities as they worked with their peers to provide, evaluate, document, and report Individualised Supported Living arrangements.

In addition, learners needed to demonstrate effective communication using multimodal resources to report and present to ISL participants, families, formal and informal supports, and to NDIA staff the evidence for, recommendations supporting, and any barriers to sustaining a specific ILO arrangement.

Also, learners had opportunities and support to develop awareness of their leadership strengths and strategies to tackle unfamiliar problems, especially complex challenges involving working with and the inclusion of people of diverse abilities, interests, and needs in everyday settings. Furthermore, participants had the opportunity to enhance their communication abilities through written, visual, verbal, and nonverbal means, as well as to learn about essential technology integration for creating and delivering content geared towards a community audience (e.g., preparing and presenting a PowerPoint presentation).

The professional development program was subject to research and evaluation, the results of which are documented in this report. Three research questions were addressed by this project, in relation to the development and delivery of the ISL professional development program, these were:

1. Does the ISL professional development program change (increase) the knowledge and understanding that staff have of what constitutes a good, individualised living option (ILO), how people with disability might be supported to achieve ILOs, and how the ISL framework might be used to establish, monitor and evaluate the quality of an ILO arrangement?
2. Does the ISL professional development program change (increase) the skills of staff with respect to working with people with disability and their family to plan for an ILO arrangement?
3. What outcomes (and of what quality) are achieved for people with disability and their family as a consequence of participating in a process to establish an ILO supported by staff who have undertaken the ISL professional development program; what is the experience of people with disability?

## Method

### Ethics approval

The protocol for the research was reviewed by and subsequently granted ethics approval by The University of Melbourne Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC approval 13911). Access to participants was facilitated by Able Australia and Araluen.

### Research team

For the development, delivery and evaluation of the ISL professional development program a team of researchers and representatives from the community service organisations were involved. Professor Keith McVilly oversaw the planning and development of project activities and led the facilitation of weekly seminars. Dr Allison Creed and Gemma Dodevska undertook the interview component. Dr Meredith Prain and Gemma Dodevska undertook a content analysis of the ISL plans developed. Deductive analysis of post interview transcripts against Kirkpatrick's framework was undertaken by Gemma Dodevska and Thomas Sutherland, in consultation with the whole research team, followed by inductive analysis by Gemma.

### Participants

Four groups of participants were invited to be involved in the project; including senior disability practitioners, people with a disability (clients of the practitioners), family members, and paid carers involved with the people with disability (see Table 2). They were recruited across 3 states and one territory including, the Australian Capital Territory (1), Victoria (6), and Queensland (1). The participants roles at their organisations included operations management (1), services management (3), Support coordinators (2), business development management (1) and quality management (1). However, one person moved to another organisation halfway through the training. Consequently, a total of 7 people, two males and five females participated fully in the professional development program. Six participated in pre and post interviews with one person participating in a post interview only.

### Professional development participants

Invitations to participate in the ISL professional development program and research occurred via the distribution of a HREC approved PLS (See appendix 1) and consent form (see appendix 2) by CEO's or their delegates in the Community Service Organisations. These were sent to a purposive sample of senior disability practitioners at each organisation. Staff had the opportunity to choose if they wanted to be involved in the ISL professional development programme or if they would prefer to register for alternative professional development opportunities as they become available in the organisation. It was emphasised that declining the opportunity to participate in the current programme would not disadvantage them with respect to their participation in future professional development opportunities. Subsequently, a total of 9 people expressed an interest in taking part, one person declined to take part in the training due to competing workload demands. Of the 8 people who chose to take part in the training, a total of 7 (2 from Araluen and 5 from Able Australia) completed the training.

### ISL participants

People with disability already engaged with senior disability support practitioners involved in the project formed the client participant group. Invitations to participate in the evaluation occurred via the distribution of a HREC approved PLS (see appendix 3) and consent form (see appendix 4) by CEO's or their delegates of the Community Service Organisations to a purposive sample of people with disability that they supported. People with disability had the opportunity to choose if they wanted to be involved in the current ISL programme or if they would prefer to register their interest in receiving similar supports in the future as they become available. It was emphasised

that declining the opportunity to participate in the current program would not disadvantage them with respect to their participation in future opportunities. Participants were asked who, including the names, relationships and contact details (i.e. phone number, email) they would like to be involved (from their formal and informal support networks) in the ISL evaluation process. Participants were asked to provide their consent to share information that is relevant to the evaluation of their ISL living arrangement. Family members / carers and disability support professionals were invited to participate based on the request, information and consent provided by client participants.

Family members or carers nominated by people with disability to assist in the evaluation of their living arrangement were also participants. They were recruited at the same time as the participants with disability. A total of 5 family members or carers participated in the evaluation. See appendix 5 for the PLS and appendix 6 for the consent forms provided to family members or carers.

Disability support professionals (i.e. paid carers of people with disability) working with people with disability already recruited to the project were also recruited. While several participated in the ISL guided planning process, only one disability support professional participated in the evaluation.

**Table 3: Project participants**

	Course Participants*	Disability service users	Family member s	Disability services staff	Interpreter
Pre- interview	7	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Training program	7	N/A	N/A	N/A	
ISL evaluation	7	6	7	3	1
Post- interview	7	3	N/A	N/A	1

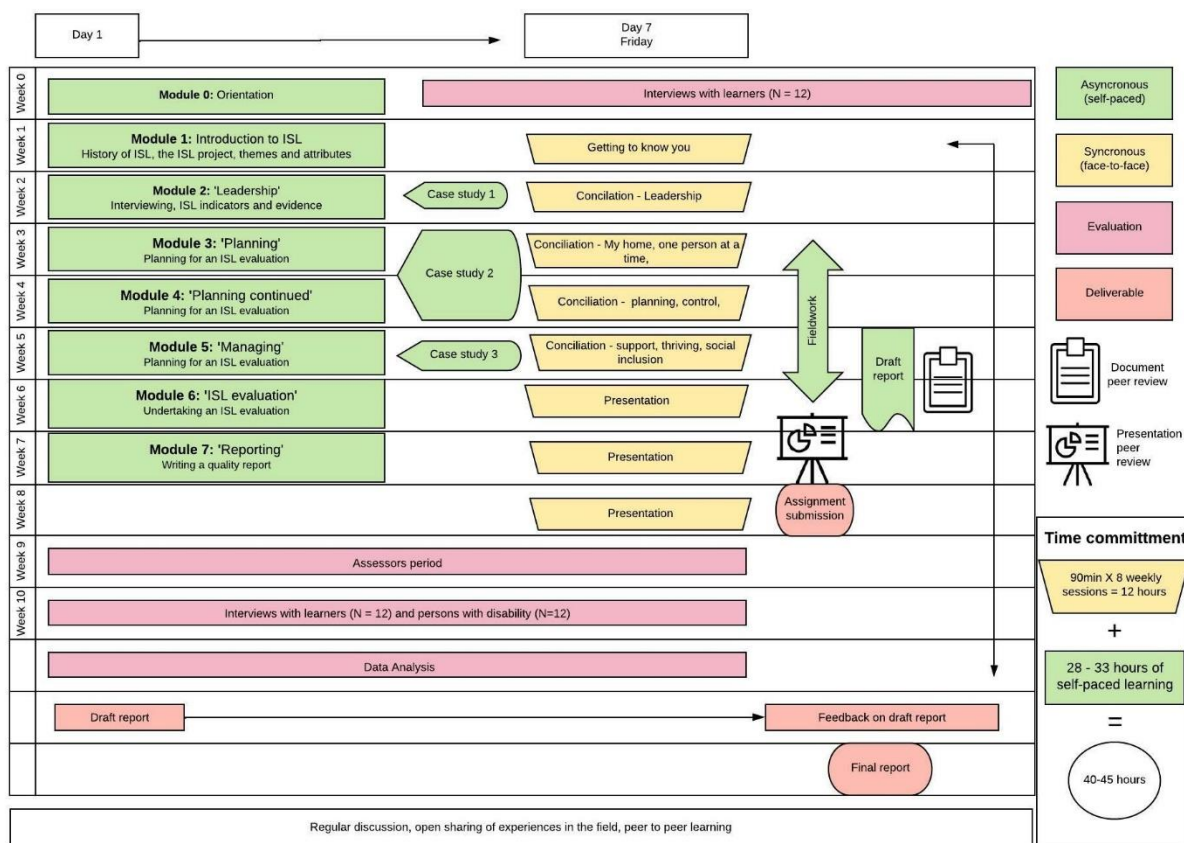
*\*One participant who completed the professional development program did not undertake a pre-interview. One participant declined to participate in the professional development program during the pre-interview. One participant gained employment at another organisation halfway through the training program and did not complete.*

## Training Procedures

Senior disability professionals undertook approximately 40 to 45 hours of professional development, inclusive of field-based assignment activities with their clients, designed to build the capacity of members of the disability sector workforce to deliver and evaluate the implementation of the Individualised Supported Living (ISL) informed by the ISL Manual 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Cocks & Thoresen, 2017). These hours and the associated activities were consistent with the requirements of a University of Melbourne micro-credential. Figure 1 provides a detailed overview of the program.

The curriculum was designed in collaboration with a curriculum design expert from the university's Arts Teaching Innovation Team and built on an existing training program delivered during an earlier phase the research project. The on-line learning was housed in a secure university-based *Canvas LMS* environment. The on-line format was based on the face-to-face format, and included recorded lecture material, self-paced learning activities, real time group discussion, and the opportunity for individualised coaching with an experienced ISL facilitator. As part of this

process, learners participated in 8 X 90-minute weekly Zoom sessions and 28-33 hours of self-paced learning. Table 4 provides details of the time spent by learners undertaking ISL fieldwork within the course. Learners spent an average of 14.55 hours on ISL fieldwork activities (minimum of 12.5 hours and maximum of 16.5 hours).



**Figure 1: ISL professional development training program MACRO**

Undertaking a quality planning process takes time and varies depending on the needs of the participant, and the strengths of the people facilitating the review. The time that it took learners at each stage of the ISL process varied, as an approximate guide, it took between 45 minutes to 3 hours to contact a potential participant and develop a service agreement, including a signed written consent form. The time it took for the learner to gather information prior to the interview was between 2 – 3 hours. The time spent facilitating the ISL interviews (i.e. a trained facilitator leading the interview and an interpreter if required) ranged between 1-4 hours. The time that was allocated to people attending the interviews ranged between 2-4 hours. Compilation of the report took between 2-4 hours, reviewing the report took between 1-3.5 hours and submitting the report took between 15 minutes and 1 hour. The time that it took for an ISL review varied, indicating the time and effort that individual planning processes take.

**Table 4: Time spent by learners at each stage of the ISL process**

The ISL process	Hours						
	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
<b>Step 1. Identified a person who might benefit from an ISL arrangement</b>	0.25	0.25	-	1	-	1	0.5
<b>Step 2. Contacted ISL participant to develop a service agreement</b>	0.5	0.5	-	2	-	0.5	0.5
<b>Step 3. Gathered information</b>	2	3	-	2	-	3	2
<b>Step 4. Facilitated the ISL interview</b>	4*	1	-	1	-	2	2
<b>Step 5. Attended the ISL interview</b>	4**	2.5	-	2	-	2	
<b>Step 6. Compiled the report</b>	2	4	-	4	-	3	10
<b>Step 7. Review the report with the individual and their nominated representative to check that they agree with the content</b>	3.5*	1	-	1	-	2	0
<b>Step 8. Submitted the report</b>	0.25	0.25	-	1	-	0.25	1
<b>Total hours in the ILS process (independent of undertaking the professional development course work)</b>	16.6	12.5		14		13.75	16

\*includes 2.5 hours of travel time; \*\* Includes 2 hours for an interpreter;

## Data collection and analysis

Seven senior disability professionals volunteered to take part in interviews before and after undertaking the professional development program. Each recruited a client with whom they would work during the program (noting that two learners worked together with a single client). Three people with disability who had their living arrangements evaluated as part of the program also volunteered for an individual interview, with one person choosing to have a family member present during the interview.

NVivo software was used to code the data. Interview data were subject to deductive thematic analysis informed by an adaptation of the Kirkpatrick framework. This process initially involved two research assistants, who then consulted with the wider research team on multiple occasions to reach a consensus view on the selection of quotes that best illustrated the agreed codes.

The Kirkpatrick framework (Kirkpatrick, 2009; Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006) has been widely used to evaluate educational programs and to justify resource allocation by understanding how a professional development program aligns with broader organisational goals. The adaptation of the Kirkpatrick framework used for the deductive analysis in the current project identified four levels for the evaluation of training:

- **Level 1 – Reaction:** The reaction level determines participants satisfaction level or how they feel about the training program. Assessing how engaged the participant was, how they contributed, and how they responded assists evaluators to recognise how well the participants perceive the training program.
- **Level 2 - Learning:** The learning level measures the level of knowledge, skills, and values acquired by the participants from the program. This level measures what the participants think they will be able to



perform, the expected change, how assured they are that they can perform it and, how driven they are to perform it.

- Level 3 – *Behaviour*: The behaviour level ascertains the changes in the behaviours of the participants in the work environment as a result of the program. The measurement of this level is an activity that should occur over weeks or months following the inputs that the participants received from the training program.
- Level 4 – *Results*: The impact/results level examines the institutional outcomes that demonstrate a good return on investment and can be attributed to the training program. Considering the institutional outcomes, a task that can be challenging is to design a method to evaluate these outcomes which are typically more long term in nature.

Pre-training interviews were conducted with the senior disability professionals. These interviews explored the participants expectations of the program, their existing understanding of what was needed to establish a sustainable ILO, and how they might go about supporting a client progress an ILO. Their understanding of what was needed to sustain an ILO was coded in nVivo against the ISL framework. This constituted base-line data with respect to participants' knowledge about progressing an ILO. Base-line data were later used in comparison to data gathered in post-training and implementation interviews, to evaluate the participants learning / acquisition of new knowledge (i.e., Kirkpatrick Level 2) and changing professional behaviours with respect to how they might go about supporting a client to progress an ILO over time (i.e., Kirkpatrick Level 3).

In addition, post-training interviews were used to gauge the senior disability professionals' reaction to the training (i.e., Kirkpatrick Level 1). Finally interviews with clients and their families were used to ascertain the impact of the training on the clients' experience and beliefs concerning their future prospects for progressing an ILO (i.e., Kirkpatrick Level 4).

## Results

We first present the post-course interview data, analysed according to all four of the Kirkpatrick levels. We later present the comparison of the pre and post interview data using Kirkpatrick Level 2 (individual learnings). Coding as presented below incorporates the results with the benefit of the whole of team conciliation process.

### Analysis of post-training interviews using all four levels of the Kirkpatrick model

#### Level 1 – Reaction

Coding comparisons between the two researchers who undertook the initial analyses revealed moderate (.43) to substantial (.68) agreement when coding to 'reaction'. Coding as presented below incorporates the results, with the benefit of the whole of team conciliation process (i.e., not just relying on the 2 principal coders).

Most (86%) of the participants reacted to the overall structure of the program spread over 12 weeks, including the 8 weekly 90 minute live tutorial sessions. The terms used to describe this activity varied with words such as "group conciliation" "class" "discussion groups" "catch-up" "session" "meet" and "discussion".

The most frequently recorded reaction (100% of respondents) to the 90-minute weekly sessions was of satisfaction.

*"So, those discussion groups were excellent, like, weekly" (P1)*

*"I thought the online tutorials were really- the way that the syllabus was structured, having that time to practice our ISL assessments during that time, I found to be very, very helpful" (P2)*

*"So I really, really enjoyed the group conciliation" (P3)*

*"... it was very nice to – to meet with our peers" (P4)*

*"I did like the aspect of going back into the class on the Friday and we actually read through it." (P6)*

*"I really liked the weekly catch-up sessions with everybody" (P7)*

One person noted that the 90-minute weekly sessions were accessible.

*"I think another thing to add was that it's accessible. So even though face-to-face, would've been lovely. I've found online, having small children and I don't work full time. Having that possibility to jump onto the computer and have a good discussion with people was also very attractive" (P2)*

Some respondents (57%) noted that there was not enough time in the weekly seminars and suggested longer:

*"I found it difficult to do the 1 ½ hours a week. Because by the time I warmed up... it was hard to get back into it week by week, when we're so busy at work... ideally it would be great to do it in three days or something, but I don't think that's feasible from a work context. A day, definitely though, would have been great." (P1)*

*"Yeah and I think look that was a common thread throughout the whole course. Was allowing more time for those discussions." (P3)*

Most (86%) of the participants reacted to accessing and navigating the Learning Management System (LMS). The terms used to describe this activity varied with words such as “online system”, “LMS”, “campus platform”, “online learning”. There were mixed responses to accessing and navigating the LMS.

Two people expressed a very positive experience.

*“So even just to physically navigate the site, that was really good. Once I got the hang of that it worked really well. That process for uploading the reports and the two assessments was really easy to navigate.” (P4)*

*“So I'm - I've been a student for a long time so I'm very used to portals and accessing things. So that came quite easy to me. I don't know if it would come easy to other people, but I found it [LMS] pretty easy to use.” (P6)*

One person expressed a relatively positive experience.

*“And then the online system I found to be okay, good. I took a little bit of backwards and forwards, but I think any new system does.” (P2)*

Three people expressed a negative experience.

*“...because the LMS people couldn't use it properly...” (P5)*

*“I didn't really enjoy the LMS. I found that to be a little bit challenging.” (P7)*

*“But again, like, the videos were really good but I got confused about what questions needed to go with it. So, I had to keep watching it again and again. Because I couldn't find the questions properly. And I couldn't quite understand what I was meant to do, either” (P1)*

Some (43%) of the participants reacted to the online readings (see appendix 7 for a list of online readings). The terms used to describe this activity varied with words such as “read”, “readings”, and “manual”. There were mixed responses to the readings that ranged from finding the online readings ‘good’ to reports of difficulty reading in an online format to challenges with the length of the readings. Solutions suggested by respondents included having the option to have a printout version and breaking down the readings into ‘chunks’.

*“The readings online were good. That was the format. I had - and I suppose when you're working from home, you know, some people don't have access to a printer. I've got a hard copy of the manual now.” (P4)*

*“Well, it's very accessible. It's written in plain English for practitioners like me and my support co-ordinators. It's just an easy thing to read. It's not overly academic or couched in jargon. It's made for practice.” (P5)*

*“But we were also encouraged to read 18-30 pages online. And then use the message box. I don't read 30 pages online very well. And the manual might be 80 pages long. I don't know how long it is. I'm much better to have a hard copy that I can draw, scribble, write questions, and all those sticky notes over.” (P5)*

Two people who ‘struggled to stay focused’ with the readings highlighted that reading each section of the manual out loud in the weekly sessions was an aspect they liked.

*“Manual, yes. Really long; again, I struggled to stay focused a lot when reading by myself. I did like the aspect of going back into the class on the Friday, and we actually read through it.” (P6)*

*"So, for me, all that reading. That was way too much university-style for me. Not how I learn, not how I integrate information. So, I spent a lot of time reading, and it not going in, which is why the discussion groups were so good for me." (P1)*

Most (86%) of the participants reacted to the video resources. The terms used to describe this activity varied with words such as "videos", "case stud\*" and "stud\*". Most (83%) respondents responded positively to the video resources.

*"I think those videos, sorry, and I should have mentioned that in the previous question, those videos were excellent." (P1)*

*"...but loved the videos. Just, like, the videos were just fantastic. Yeah, really." (P2)*

*"You can't replace face to face, but the videos were really positive and they added that extra element rather than just the written work, you know" (P4)*

One person noted that the duration of some videos was a bit long and then upon reflection, indicated that it was more about the interactive element of videos that supported their engagement.

*"...in the modules, for example, there were case studies where they would interview a person who was living in an ISL arrangement. I really liked those because they're kind of interactive in the sense of you're hearing a story about a person's life." (P6)*

Some (43%) of the participants reacted to the quizzes. Two people noted that the purpose of the quizzes was not clear. One person noted that the quizzes were the same as in 'e-learning'.

*"I found the quizzes, particularly one of the quizzes, it just didn't have a point. I didn't get it, like, I didn't understand why we were doing it. And I still don't understand why we did that quiz and why that was part of the whole module because it didn't fit for me." (P1)*

*"The quizzes, one quiz in particular, was just...I don't know where it was going but I think the quizzes were like the same ones you get on e-learning. 'Fred and Mary ran up the street. Who ran up the street? Fred and Mary'. You don't learn anything. So, there was a little bit of that." (P5)*

Some (43%) of the participants reacted to the discussion board. The participants noted that the discussion board was underutilised amongst the group.

*"I did ask one question at the beginning, but no one responded. So, I didn't really engage much. And the automatic responses didn't work until towards the end, like notifications, didn't come up until the end of the course. And then I just saw that people were just...it could have been private conversations as opposed to a discussion board." (P1)*

*"I think, although what was good was [facilitator's name] did often say you have to go and post something on the discussion board. I think if it was a longer course, that would be used more, because kind of all of our assessment was at the end. I think if we'd had a number of, which was fine, but I think if it was like a 10-week course or a 12-week course, and you had to do a number of assessments that would get people used to using that discussion board." (P2)*

*"And also, more time asking questions about the expectations of a certain report. I know that they had the discussion board to back that up but sometimes we would write on the discussion board and wouldn't get an answer for a while." (P3)*

The feedback from the quizzes and discussion board indicated that the purpose of the activities could be made clearer.

Most (92%) of the participants reacted to the presentation of the case study. The terms used to describe this activity included “assignment” and “presentation”. Responses to both were positive.

*“And even doing the oral presentation which some people may have felt like it might not have done much for their professional development but for me it did because I got the input from the others to ask me “Oh have you thought about this? Or have you thought about that?” or you know so I found that really beneficial just to hear from others and seek advice from professionals in the room. And I think that sometimes what the sector’s missing is that collaboration between service providers because of the challenges surrounding funding and the competitive nature of what we do now.” (P3)*

*“I mean, I love making a PowerPoint presentation myself. So I’m very used to presenting; very happy to do all that. I felt the presentations were good and they brought up what other people maybe had picked more on; “Oh, you must [have] done something a bit different from me and got that type of answer. Oh, that’s interesting”, and to be able to have that discussion afterwards to ask a few questions about their case study. So that was - I really liked that aspect of it because I think you get different perspectives from people in different roles.” (P6)*

Most (71%) participants reacted to the final report. The reactions to the reporting template provided, the word count and expectations were mixed.

*“Facilitator: But in terms of what...you felt didn't support your professional development when you consider the overall program or room for improvement or more tailored way of centring it for yourself?”*

*Interviewee: No, I liked it. It was structured, we knew what was due when, we had all the boundaries and guidelines. I was fine. I didn't have as big a problem. There were people caring more about the word count and stuff like that, and it was just like, “Really?” Such a small thing. It was fine. It was good.” (P7)*

*“The report was a bit long and a bit repetitive. I would have liked to have been a bit shorter because it kind of just, to the end, turned into this task where I was just filling out boxes and things.” (P6)*

*“I was a bit confused about what the assignment entailed. That's all. That was my main thing.” (P2)*

Two participants reacted to the report and template with positive sentiment yet reactions to the word limit were met with negative sentiment.

*“But I do like the layout of the report...the background and the executive summary. I've never written a report before, like I say, but I did like the way it was laid out. Then I just adapted - put it into our - what [organization] colours are and that sort of stuff. But I like it because it was easy to read these eight themes, you know, and you go through. I even did use a bit from the template that was shared with us in the toolkit that had, like, a basic understanding of what those themes were. So I think for someone reading it, it was good. I don't think it could be much longer because I don't know if people would lose track, you know, because there's a lot of information to read. But I liked the set out of it and once I got in it was quite easy to follow and for me to actually complete.” (P4)*

*“I struggled, really struggled with the report. I struggled because I know it was 1000 words. My first cut was four and a half thousand. I got it down to 2800.” (P4)*

## Level 2 - Learning

Coding comparisons between the two researchers who undertook the initial analyses revealed none (0) to substantial (.76) agreement when coding to 'learning'. The variability in coding agreement might reflect the difference in knowledge and experience in using the ISL framework whereby one coder had 10 years of experience and one coder was just being introduced to the framework as part of the research project. Given that 'new knowledge' inferred knowledge of the framework, this may have affected coding comparisons. Coding as presented below incorporates the final results, with the benefit of the whole of team conciliation process (i.e., not just relying on the 2 principal coders).

All of the participants indicated the development of skills. Participants shared their perceptions of developing skills including the acknowledgement of their own professional development needs (2), collaborating (2), critical thinking (4), implementing the ISL framework (3), reporting (3) and digital literacy skills (1).

*"This course upskills people to improve their capacity to make a contribution to people's lives." (P5)*

*"...forging those networks and relationships is super important in the industry that we work in and look I think it's – some more so than others are willing to do that. And definitely I know that both our organisations that were there were definitely wanting to engage and learn from each other." (P3)*

*"My first takeaway from this is permission and methodology to have big conversations about people's lives. It's that stuff I've spoken about with the client where we'd never planned for his life. What would he like to do? And never included his voice in that and never had the question. Having that was a big takeaway for me and will change my practise in terms of having discussions with families and with clients about, not just how can we solve this micro issue, but as part of that discussion, how are you going with your life direction? How are you going with the supports that we're providing you? That was really important." (P2)*

*"I can definitely analyse an arrangement more now, and I'm looking for things that I wasn't looking for before. So, using the themes that we were taught, I'm now looking for those, whereas I didn't at all before." (P7)*

*"So - but again it's all good for thinking about, "Oh, what is the risk involved there? What is, you know, how can we do that?" So again, just reviewing everything you've learnt and putting it down after your interview it really tests your memory and your skills at taking in information and being able to present it in a formal manner; a professional manner I should say." (P6)*

*"I had never done a PowerPoint presentation before... So I did Google how to do a good PowerPoint presentation and they were saying it's a six by six rule and, well, this wasn't quite six by six, but I did manage to present it in under 10 minutes, so I was pleased with that." (P4)*

Most of the participants (85%) shared information indicating changes in attitude. They expressed changes in the way they thought about the value of the course for senior disability support professionals, the meaning of individualised supported living, person-centred practices, and reflective practice.

*"So for me, it's made me think a bit differently around the way that we use resources, but also about reaching out more to people like [facilitator] and [facilitator] and others in the organisation and in [the] other organisations, to try to build a... or just connecting to the existing group of people who are passionate about this kind of thing..." (P2)*

*"Yeah definitely. Particularly because it enforces you to explore solutions to barriers that you are facing in that moment in time instead of just putting it on hold. And it [ISL] also gets you to think outside the box and it allows you the time..." (P3)*

*"Well, it certainly has changed...that old practice and the discussions that I'll have, and also the discipline."*

*"I think overall if you're talking about the course it's changed – like I've always thought that I'm really inclusive and I think about everything and the participants at the centre of everything I do. But the thing that I loved the most is the intricacies of which you're looking at something. So you're not – you're really, really looking into it [ISL] and trying to think of all the holistic factors that come into how somebody is in the situation they're in. So for me that was mind blowing and boggling*

*because I'd always thought "I'm doing this so well," not – you know you can always improve but I just loved that there was a framework that I could look at and really go "Have I thought of this? What about this? What about that part?" Instead of just - you know a lot of what we do in this sector can be quite reactive and I think that ISL makes you more proactive." (P3)*

Most of the participants (85%) indicated increased confidence in their capabilities. Five participants spoke about increased confidence in their practice, including what they can now implement (5) and confirmation of what they already put into place in practice (2). One person spoke about increased confidence in their knowledge of their colleagues' job role. One person shared their experience of increased confidence in their ability to develop professionally. Three people shared their experiences of having increased confidence to have conversations about a person's living arrangement with formal and informal supports.

*"I got to understand [colleagues] place in the organisation, what their skillset was, who their clients are. And so from that, we've done things like invited them to our weekly intake meeting to present on some clients who need some new accommodation, which never would've happened if we hadn't been in a group together... So those clients will be offered some housing that they wouldn't have been offered otherwise." (P2)*

*"So I think that the framework allows you to empower more than just your participants, it also helps you start those conversations and learnings with your staff to allow them to grow. And I think that definitely overcoming it is going to be just instilling and asking the questions that are in the framework to the NDIS, to my staff, to – you know asking those questions isn't – even if it is a DSW who's asking those questions it's not going to take any skin off our noses to sit down and have those conversations with people. It's what I feel is the issue is then what do you do with that information? And how can you then overcome those challenges that the ISL framework is identifying through conversations?" (P3)*

*"Yeah, I think so. Everything that we were learning... relate[d] to work. It was good. Which is very different from when you study at university [the] first time around at a school, just learning theory. This time, as a mature age student, it was probably that little bit easier to comprehend and grasp the concepts because you could relate to them" (P7)*

New knowledge was coded against the attributes of the ISL framework that participants discussed during the interviews. Participants discussed evidence and indicators related to the theme Leadership (5), My Home (1), One person at a time (1), Planning (5), Control (2), Support (5), Thriving (3) and Social Inclusion (2). Participants also discussed developing their knowledge related to person-centred practice and quality of life.

**Table 5. Training program knowledge outcomes based on the eight ISL themes and their supporting attributes**

ISL Theme	ISL Attribute	Outcome
<b>Leadership</b>	1.1 The arrangement is based on a clear vision and strong ideas.	Participants spoke about embedding the discussion process within 'the houses' to understand what people want and the development of ideas they had to address barriers including asking 'clients' questions that have not been asked before.
	1.2 Key people provide the leadership to set up and continue the arrangement.	Participants described key people who stand out as important people for the continued development of arrangements including the actions that were being undertaken to set up new arrangements.
<b>My home</b>	2.1 The person has secure tenure in the home.	One learner noted that they had supported a person to find a private rental.
	2.2 The person does normal things that people do in their homes.	*

	2.3 The person's home reflects who the person is and what he or she likes.	*
<b>One Person at a Time</b>	3.1 The arrangement is developed around the person.	One learner discussed a situation whereby the arrangement was developing in relation to ensuring the person's voice is heard and that their needs and choices are reflected in the activities that they undertake.
	3.2 The living arrangement does not group persons with disabilities.	*
<b>Planning</b>	4.1 Planning focuses on the person.	Participants spoke about asking questions to ensure people's wishes are understood, finding out how people's quality of life could be improved and how to make the most out of the resources that people have.
	4.2 People close to the person are involved in planning.	Participants shared their views on the importance of having conversations with family members, support workers, support coordinators, volunteers and setting up circles of support when reviewing living arrangements.
	4.3 The person's future is central to planning.	Participants discussed the need for planning for the future, looking at the bigger picture and people's lives and goals and spending time and effort in the planning process.
<b>Control</b>	5.1 The person and those close to him or her (if appropriate) have control over the person's life.	*
	5.2 Self-determination for the person is central to the arrangement.	Two participants discussed the importance of the person having self-determination.
	5.3 The person and those close to him or her (if appropriate) have control over the arrangement.	Two participants discussed the importance of people having increased levels of control over their arrangement.
<b>Support</b>	6.1 Supports are flexible and adapt to changes in the person's needs.	Adapting to people's communication needs, appropriately engaging with people, adapting supports to reflect the person and/or their family's cultural needs.
	6.2 A variety of supports are in place that suit the person.	Developing circles of support, considering the role of formal, informal, and mainstream supports, what needs to be funded and why, collaboration between colleagues to share information and identify appropriate supports were mentioned by participants.



<b>Thriving</b>	7.1 The person's lifestyle and wellbeing are improving.	Discussions with family and people about accessing community activities related to health and well-being and navigating personal relationships was highlighted as important.
	7.2 The person has valued roles.	One learner spoke about thriving in relation thinking critically about a person's opportunity for choice and control.
	7.3 There are many opportunities for growth and development.	*
<b>Social Inclusion</b>	8.1 The person has close and long-lasting relationships.	*
	8.2 The person has a rich social network.	One learner mentioned 'social input' as a component of the person's life they considered.
	8.3 The person takes part in the community.	One person discussed how they reflected on supporting a person to get more involved in their community.

\*No data available on which to base any interpretation

One interviewee discussed Specific learning about a person that they undertook the ISL evaluation with meaning, through the process they learnt something new about the person that they did not know before.

*"Through the process of the interview, his parents said to the RSL, our residential services lead, so the house manager, "Oh, yeah, when he's home we went swimming every day." And she said, "What, does he like swimming?" And they said, "It's his favourite thing." And she said, "We don't take him swimming. I'll make sure that take him swimming. We'll do once a week first and then we'll [do it more]."* (P2)

### Level 3 - Behaviour

Coding comparisons between the two researchers who undertook the initial analyses revealed none (0) to complete (1) agreement when coding to 'learner behaviour'. Coding as presented below incorporates the final results, with the benefit of the whole team conciliation process (i.e., not just relying on the 2 principal coders).

All of the participants discussed intended and/or potential opportunities for applying learning in a work context. Four participants indicated that they would undertake ISL evaluations with more clients, four participants discussed professional development, three participants highlighted broader work practice considerations including how they would change the way they respond to complaints, and the types of discussions that they would have with frontline staff.

*"Facilitator: So if you came out of [the course]... and you're already obviously applying it to someone new.*

*Interviewee: Yes"* (P3)

*"... more for my workers. Like it's great for me to have it [ISL training] right. So, I can go and talk to my client but when I'm not there, they're going to talk to the support workers. So, what knowledge do the support workers have, if they haven't done the course? It's like with the NDIS right? Like we throw out all these concepts and ideas but I train my staff in it [ISL] because a lot of my clients don't have anyone to talk to about it during the day, when I'm not there. And I'm not there because I'm not a frontline worker."* (P1)

*"So I think that the framework allows you to empower more than just your participants, it also helps you start those conversations and learnings with your staff to allow them to grow."* (P3)

Most (71%) described changes in their work behaviour, including how they interact with colleagues, managers, support workers, families and clients as a consequence of participating in the program.

*"And the way it's changed the way that I interact with families, and service coordinators and etc now" (P2)*

*"...you know a lot of what we do in this sector can be quite reactive and I think that ISL makes you more proactive." (P3)*

*"I work alone. I don't have any, like, colleagues. I've got my manager and then there's support - and then there's, like, support workers. So my manager has done the ISL framework; she did it with me as well. So I could lean on her." (P6)*

Most (57%) described how they could pass on information about the ISL framework to others, and to be able to teach people in their organisation new knowledge and skills related to ISL.

*"So what a revelation to actually have the discussion with families now to say, "How's it going? What's your vision? Do you think they're living their best life? If not, why not? What can we do?" (P2)*

*"So I think that those discussions and that learning from each other and being able to challenge each other's points of views and provide that evidence base. So I really, really enjoyed the group conciliation." (P3)*

*"And definitely I know that both our organisations that were there were definitely wanting to engage and learn from each other." (P3)*

*"I've already kind of started and I mean look I've always worked quote differently in terms of I'm always trying to put my staff and my participants first and prioritise them and upskill them because I'm very passionate about finding out what my staff need and want and what their goals are, and trying to develop them. So I think that the framework allows you to empower more than just your participants, it also helps you start those conversations and learnings with your staff to allow them to grow." (P3)*

*"If I think about the client that I did my presentation on - so I did the full interview with them; and I think when I went through those questionnaires it did kind of raise that, "Oh, that hasn't really been addressed since you've moved here. That's something we can work on". Then that's given me ideas of, well, how would we overcome that barrier of language, for example, and how would we be able to get more involved in your community because that's something that's really lacking in your life." (P6)*

*"But it's also good to use it in a pre-evaluation; what do you want for the future? So I use it now... at least I know if I kind of cover those eight areas that's a well-rounded holistic view of somebody. That could go to, you know, a report to try to request more funds from the NDIA, you know, to get some - some, you know, ILO funding in there to be able to build somebody's dream home, you know, the ideal supports for that dream home. So whilst it is effectively to evaluate an existing living situation, which was what we did for the assignment, it's also good to use as a pre-planning for someone's living situation, you know, and revisit two years down the track or a year when you have another how's it all working out. Then you'll know." (P4).*

*"The issue for us is, how do prove the quality. Because we now know that we can do it." (P5)*

## Level 4 - Results

Coding comparisons between the two researchers who undertook the initial analyses revealed none (0) to complete (1) agreement when coding to 'results'. Coding as presented below incorporates the final results, with the benefit of the whole of team conciliation process (i.e., not just relying on the 2 principal coders).

The impact/results level examines the institutional outcomes that demonstrate a good return on investment, and which can be attributed to the training program. These are difficult data to capture without a longitudinal follow-up. Within the constraints of the current study, there were only limited opportunities to gather data that could be interpreted in the context of Kirkpatrick Level 4.

Five participants expressed high morale in response to the professional development program. Participants described how the program supported their passion, feelings of excitement, engagement and learning from fellow team members and colleagues from another organisation, and pride in undertaking a professional development program at the University of Melbourne. One respondent suggested that family members or volunteers could also benefit from undertaking a 'simpler' version of the course.

*"We are passionate about what we do, so we get engrossed in it." (P1)*

*"So, all of those factors were the things that initially got me excited about coming." (P2)*

*"For me personally – which could be very different from other people – it was the engagement with others and learning from others and those group discussions." (P3)*

*"But [my friend] was impressed that I was learning, and I said, "You can always learn. It doesn't matter how old you are, you know, you have to learn something every day". So, on a personal note I was quite chuffed that it was through Melbourne Uni. I'm just going to say that, because I was." (P4)*

*"If it improved, I would have another half dozen, at least. And if it was made into components, or a simpler version, aimed at family members of volunteers, I'd have 30, at least." (P5)*

One learner described an example of increased client satisfaction when the learner responded to a complaint from knowledge obtained from the program.

*"I had a complaint recently about...And when I rang to have that discussion with the family member, because that feedback to me is a complaint, "This is what I want and you're not giving it to me... with this ISL stuff I said, well, how is your sibling going? And do you think they are living their best life? And what's your vision? And they said, "Oh, thanks for asking, this is what I want for her." (P1)*

Two participants described examples of increased service offerings to NDIS participants as a result of the training program. One learner described how, as a result of the training, NDIS participants were offered: bricks and mortar (a house); more responsive complaints handling; and access to increased community activities. Participants also indicated that they would have people that they would refer to the course if made into a micro-credential.

*"If it [the professional development program] improved, I would have another half dozen, at least. And if it was made into components, or a simpler version, aimed at family members or volunteers, I'd have 30, at least." (P5)*

## Comparative analysis of pre and post- training interviews using Kirkpatrick Level 2

Between the pre and post interviews participants shared experiences that highlighted a shift from a more system-led to a more person-led approach. For example, in the pre-interview, one person discussed how their role was to improve other people's quality of life but their comments could be interpreted to suggest they held a dominant role in final decisions about 'who lives with who'. In the post interview, this same person indicated the importance of being more reflective, challenging their own knowledge and thoroughly considering issues from a variety of angles.

**Pre:** *"Look I think the more that I explore and educate myself the better I am equipped to manage and to improve quality of life for people living with a disability as a while, not just kind of front line on the ground there should be choice and I mean in a SIL [i.e. group home] environment there always is. So, I would never put clients together that didn't want to be together" (P3).*

**Post:** *"I think that it's vital that we are as a sector constantly developing our skillset. Particularly how to build further voices for our vulnerable cohorts. My favourite word ever is empowerment and that's what I really love to instil. And I think that courses like this really – you know I guess it asks you the questions that sometimes you miss. And it makes you think outside the box and really ensure that we are putting the participants first. But the thing that I loved the most is the intricacies of which you're looking at something. So...really looking into it and trying to think of all the holistic factors that come into how somebody is in the situation that they're in. So, for me that was mind blowing and boggling because I'd always thought "I'm doing this so well," not – you know you can always improve but I just loved that there was a framework that I could look at and really go "have I thought of this? What about this? What about that part?" Instead of you know a lot of what we do in this sector can be quite reactive and I think that ISL make you more proactive". (P3)*

Furthermore, in response to a question about what they saw as a good quality living option, another participant said:

**Pre:** *"Well, one that is responsive and individualised, exactly what the individual needs." (P4)*

**Post:** *"But going through the themes I heard more than I imagined, you know extra things that, you know, having you know, because the eight themes are really, really good, like social input. All of the components of it were really good and it prompted me to learn more about the person. So just having that overview was, I think was really good. I learnt something about him that I didn't know" (P4)*

A further participant spoke about supporting people with their NDIS application in the pre-interview with a heavy focus on a system led approach and process. After the training, the same participant shared experiences that highlighted complexity and a potentially more nuanced approach.

**Pre:** *"So obviously application processes are heavily evidence based and we have those resources and that's why they come to us. And sometimes you have to say, look, excellent attempt. Great job. However, if you really think about it, there's some very specific guidelines that you need to be working toward here. It's [NDIS funding application] like a government tender, there's a million tick boxes you've got to tick and then you've got to provide evidence. And how can you know how to do that?" (P7)*

**Post:** *"I'd never really considered an arrangement in the way that I do now, so it was broken into so many different compartments, and I now understand the complexities of an arrangement far better." (P7)*

The same participant also indicated that they have the ability to implement the ISL framework as a result of the training.

**Post:** *“I can definitely analyse an arrangement more now, and I’m looking for things that I wasn’t looking at before. So, using the themes that we were taught. I’m now looking for those, whereas I didn’t at all before.” (P7)*

Participants also shifted in their understanding of what constitutes ILO; shifting from understanding it as simply an alternative SIL arrangement (i.e. group home) in the pre-interviews to an alignment with an ISL arrangement (i.e. NDIS ILO) in the post interviews.

**Pre:** *“A better understanding of supported independent living. Because it’s a big beast that new sort of independent living standards... my dream would be to have a big SIL house or a SIL block of units that a lot of my clients could live in” (P6)*

**Post:** *“But I really loved the idea that there’s these 8 aspects and you can – you can hold them up against someone’s living arrangement and go, “oh actually we haven’t really gotten around to that because we’ve been so focused on surviving, we haven’t even thought about what does it look like to thrive”. (P6)*

There was also a shift in the way people conceptualized ILO between pre and post interviews, with participants emphasizing the step of finding a physical house as the main driver and barrier for people wanting to pursue their independent living goals.

**Pre:** *“And you talk to every single provider, and they say the same thing. That there is demand for opportunities to build on my independence, have my own home, you know move away from the family home. But there’s not the housing to back that up.” (P3)*

However, one participant seemed to hold onto prevailing assumptions of what constitutes a quality ISL arrangement in the post interviews, particularly in relation to identifying a person’s disability as a barrier rather than ascertaining the degree of leadership and support that a person has in their life as constituting the barriers. This position is contrary to the ISL philosophy that ‘with the right support, all adults with disabilities can live in an ILO arrangement’.

**Post:** *“In terms of ISL, I don’t have a lot of clients who will suit an ISL specifically because they have a very niche disability and there’s other barriers that, I think, ISL would not be able to overcome... The old idea behind ISL is finding alternative ways for someone to live independently and a lot of the options that we kept coming back to would be “Oh, having a live in support worker for a client”. That’s not really viable because the support worker would have to know Auslan to be able to live and communicate with one of my clients” (P6)*

## **Participant experiences**

Participants with disability who had been supported through the ISL process by a facilitator undertaking the ISL professional development program overwhelmingly supported the ISL process:

*Interviewee: “Yes... I would say, go for it!”.*

When talking about the process of having an evaluation and the conversations that were had during the interview about moving into an ILO, the participant’s brother said:

*“One of the things that we always say is, “Oh my God” and you said one day yourself “I surprised myself”. I think dad said, “You surprise me, Sarah. You surprise me every day with all these things.”*  
(P8)

*The same participants brother asked to undertake another evaluation in a year’s time:*

One participant indicated that the mother of the person whose living arrangement was being evaluated asked for a copy of the ISL report.

*I like the report because the mother of the individual that I worked with actually wants a copy of it” (P4)*

## Discussion

This project was initiated to develop, implement and evaluate a professional development program based on the established evidence-informed ISL framework. Subsequently, the University of Melbourne in partnership with Araluen and Able Australia - disability service provider organisations committed to implementing the NDIS ILO policy - produced and tested a professional development program that included a mix of self-paced on-line activities, real-time on-line tutorials, and work-based assignments. The final assignments included working with a person with intellectual disability and their family to develop a plan for an ILO, and documenting that plan in such a way as it might be used to inform an NDIS participant to plan for, and apply for funding to support, an ILO.

Interview data from disability staff undertaking the program (pre- and post- program) and their clients were analysed using Kirkpatrick’s model for the evaluation of educational programs. These data were complemented by field notes collected by the research team during the implementation of the program. Combined, these data were used to address four research questions, each of which are addressed below followed by a summary of the overall learnings from the project, its limitations, and finally conclusions and recommendations for future directions.

### Answering the research questions

#### 1. Does the ISL professional development program change (increase) the knowledge and understanding that staff have of what constitutes a good quality ILO, how people with disability might be supported to achieve a good quality ILO, and how the ISL framework might be used to establish, monitor and evaluate the quality of an ILO arrangement?

There was evidence of an increase in knowledge and understanding of what might constitute the key considerations contributing to a good quality ILO, and how these might be included in an ILO planning process. Descriptions of key issues for consideration during the pre-interviews were heavily focused on the person’s housing arrangement. Learners spoke about what type of house a person might want to live in, what the tenancy would look like and the types of supports that people will require. Much of the focus was on the home living environment (the physical space) consistent with attributes in the ISL themes 'my home' and 'supports'. The experience of 'choice and control' for participants in an ILO was contrasted with the experiences of those accessing current housing models (e.g. continuing to live with parents or living in group homes) and the extent to which these different models supported individualisation, choice and control.

Descriptions of what constitutes a good ILO in the post interviews suggested a growing complexity in the learners’ understanding of what constitutes a good quality living arrangement. Learners expanded their understanding to include considerations of a person’s vision for their life, their home, who to live with, the supports that people have in place, the time it takes to undertake formal planning, the importance of control, what it means to thrive and what social inclusion looks like.

Many participants described how the ISL framework supported them to ask more nuanced questions when meeting with their clients, and more thoroughly consider ways to overcome potential barriers. Participants

discussed how they could use the ISL framework to support clients to plan for an ILO, and to later evaluate progress and determine where resources could be best spent to safeguard, grow and sustain an ILO.

## 2. Does the ISL professional development program change (increase) the skills of staff with respect to working with people with disability and their family to plan for an ILO arrangement?

The reports that the participants completed, together with their assignment presentations demonstrated competence at varying levels for undertaking a planning and evaluation using the ISL framework. People who did relatively well on the class presentation followed the rubric, paid attention to respecting the privacy and confidentiality of participants, provided context for the ISL evaluation, included NDIS goals, and addressed all ISL themes and evidence to support these. However, some learners included details in the presentation that they omitted in the final report. This could have been more to do with the learners' recency of experience of completing academic assignments rather than lacking knowledge or skill.

Those who did relatively well on the final report followed the template and prepared a report approaching what was deemed NDIS submission-ready. They included a detailed background, provided examples of the indicators and evidence of the ISL arrangement, and deleted template examples to produce a professional-looking report, had a list of abbreviations, a conclusion (summary of key findings and where to next). Some included additional information in appendices.

The template was provided as an example to assist with formatting, and easy marks were lost by people not following the rubric. For instance, there was a pre-formatted 'table of contents' which listed sections and subsections in cascade format, which some learners did not use to guide the formulation of their report.

An optimal report would have detailed recommendations for all elements that include clear steps towards an ILO, and ideas about achieving these. Not all learners included this level of detail. The ISL framework outlines what a quality living arrangement entails, and many ideas for recommendations could have been derived from the ISL booklet. The development of SMART goals is also recommended when preparing goal statements (i.e., goals that are: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound).

Importantly, it was expected that learners undertook self-guided research to develop their understanding of the alignment of the ISL framework with the NDIS ILO policy. This was not self-evident for all learners.

## 3. What outcomes (and of what quality) are achieved for people with disability and their family as a consequence of participating in an ISL facilitation process supported by staff who have undertaken the ISL professional development program; what was the experience of people with disability?

Outside of the interview process immediately following the implementation of the project, two participants with disability presented at a national conference and shared their experience of the ISL facilitation process undertaken with learners enrolled in the current project. They spoke about how the ISL process highlighted to them that they did not currently have sufficient support to achieve their goals. They further described how the ISL assessment process had helped them to reflect on and document what they needed ahead of their forthcoming NDIS plan review meeting. Participants also mentioned that the ISL framework:

- gives people a chance to assess if their living arrangements are right for them.
- is an opportunity to assess if supports are meeting people's goals.
- supports people to find out about what living options they have.

All three participants spoke positively about the ISL facilitation process and the conversations that they had with their ISL facilitator. They shared their experiences of having new insights raised about their lives that they had not thought of before, including asking new questions and considering alternative options.

One person said that the ISL facilitation process prompted staff to follow up on a delayed application for new housing, and the identification of needing some more support. One person reported how the process had supported them to successfully apply for an increase in their NDIS plan funding to access the supports that they need. One participant said that they really enjoyed having the ISL facilitator have a discussion with them as it also raised the achievements that the person had made in relation to the living arrangement. A question during the ISL facilitation process prompted one participant and their family to reflect on who they might want to live with if a current housemate moves out.

## **Overall, what did the research find?**

Overall, the participants were pleased with the professional development program and, with adaptations to some components of the training (e.g., more discussion time, adaptations to the on-line readings), would recommend the program to their colleagues. In the current iteration, a key strength of the program was the involvement of multiple team members within individual organisations, which allowed for networking, peer support and collaboration as part of the learning process.

The participants reported they were very pleased with the opportunity to complement the self-paced on-line learning activities and field-based assignments with the on-line real time discussion sessions. They indicated these were an important part of their learning. However, they suggested that the on-line discussion sessions could be more effective if more time was allowed (i.e. change the 8 X 90 minute sessions, to 6 X 2 hour sessions).

Participants expressed mixed experiences accessing and navigating the LMS with some expressing very positive experiences and found the LMS easy to use, while others found it difficult. Previous experience of tertiary education and online learning appeared to affect responses. Comments suggested the LMS site should be reviewed to ensure that it is accessible to a more diverse cohort of participants. Also, pre-course tuition in navigating the LMS could be provided as an optional add-on for those who had not previously used an LMS.

Participants reported mixed experiences of the online readings. Some reported the readings to be helpful and were inspired to undertake additional reading on person-centred practices. However, some reported the readings to be too long. The on-line discussion groups where some readings were read through as a group were reported by some participants to be helpful. It will be important going forward for on-line readings to be in a format that can be readily downloaded and printed.

Participants responded positively to the interactive videos. However, the interactive elements could be revised and improved. It was also suggested that the weekly introductory videos could be refined and undergo a design review. Similarly, participants highlighted that the quizzes were helpful to facilitate knowledge review, but some required reviewing - including the content, design and communication relating to the purpose of some of the quizzes.

The discussion boards were underutilised and the response times to discussion board posts were too slow. As previously highlighted and in-line with adult learning principles, the purpose of the discussion board posts including how they can support learning could be made clearer to participants, particularly people who have not previously undertaken online learning in an LMS environment.

Opportunities for presenting the participants' case studies was received well, and participants indicated how it supported their learning. It was highlighted that this was particularly so in relation to learning from other presenters by being able to ask questions and being exposed to different ISL arrangements and perspectives.

Participants responded positively to the final report assignment, which consolidated the field work they had undertaken with their client. The template provided was favourably received, and several comments suggested people might consider adapting this for future use in their work. Some comments suggested presenting the purpose of and expectations of the assignment earlier in the course would have helped them prepare.

Participants indicated that the training program supported them in developing a better understanding of their own professional development needs more broadly (including digital literacy and critical thinking), and in appreciating



the benefits of collaboration. They reported changes in the way they thought about the value of professional development for senior disability support professionals, the meaning of individualised supported living, person-centered practices, and reflective practice.

Participants described an increase in confidence in their professional capabilities; including their knowledge of all 8 themes of the ISL framework, and how to enter into conversations with their clients about such issues. Importantly participants indicated growing confidence to support clients to explore and progress an ILO proposal for the NDIS.

Some participants reported they believed they could pass on information about the ISL framework to others in their respective teams. Though the extent of this capability remains untested.

As a direct result of the training, five participants expressed positive morale, 1 provided an example of increased client satisfaction and 2 participants discussed an increase in service offerings to NDIS participants. And as noted earlier, following the formal evaluation, two participants with disability presented at a national conference and spoke about how the ISL process of which they had been part had been of benefit to them in considering and planning an ILO.

### **Limitations and future opportunities**

This project was undertaken during the COVID public health crisis and was subject to multiple delays in its implementation, and limited opportunities to recruit participants. Consequently, the ISL professional development program was undertaken with a relatively small number of participants; seven service providers and six clients (2 service providers worked with the same client), across two disability service organisations. To more fully appraise the effectiveness of the program, a larger stratified sample would be recommended including disability service providers with a variety of backgrounds and experience and clients with a range of disabilities. However, the implementation provided an opportunity for a number of experienced disability professionals to beta test the professional development resources, including working with a number of clients during this process in the real-world activity of exploring opportunities to develop ILOs. Here though, given the time constraints for the project there was no opportunity for participants and their clients to progress the resulting ILO plans to active ILOs. To fully test the efficacy of the program, a longitudinal study would be required extending over several years.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

This study has provided initial evidence of how the ISL framework can be successfully translated into a professional development program to support disability service providers work with their clients to explore and plan for ILOs. Furthermore, it has demonstrated that the curriculum component can be successfully adapted and delivered in an on-line format, and reflecting the requirements of a micro-credential.

Based on the findings of the current study, the following recommendations are made:

- Convene a working group to co-create the next iteration of the course, incorporating learnings from the current evaluation.
- Test the revised version of the course at scale, allowing for stratification of both service providers and clients across a range of experiences and circumstances.
- Develop the course into an accredited micro-credential.
- Collaborate with the NDIA to develop a framework to align the ISL training program and micro-credential to home and living supports and to the workforce capability framework.
- Develop a version of the micro-credential that could be undertaken by family members and people with disability.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1 Plain Language Statement for people participating in the training program.



## PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT

**To:**

Senior disability support practitioners

**Date:**

18 Feb 2024

**Full Project Title:**

Individualised Supported Living: development and evaluation of a professional development program

**HREC ID:**

2056572.1

**Principal Researcher:**

Professor Keith McVilly

School of Social and Political Sciences

## Why You Have Been Contacted

You have been identified as someone who, in your professional role, has experience and knowledge in the provision of services to people with disability. You are therefore invited to participate in this research project.

The aim of this project is to investigate the efficacy of a structured professional development program designed to build the capacity of members of the disability sector workforce to deliver and evaluate services guided by the implementation of the Individual Supported Living (ISL) Framework 2nd edition.

As part of this project, we hope to be able to clarify: the factors that support the implementation of the ISL professional development program; how people with disability might be supported to achieve ISL and; how the ISL framework might be used to monitor and evaluate the quality of an ISL arrangement.

We also hope to better understand the experiences and outcomes that are achieved for people with disability and their family as a consequence of participating in an ISL facilitation process supported by staff who have undertaken ISL training.

Araluen and Able Australia have funded the University of Melbourne to develop the training program and undertake the research.

## What You Will Be Asked To Do

You will be asked to participate in an 8-week professional development training program or an online equivalent. We anticipate that the training program will take approximately 42.5 hours of your time and will include self-paced learning, on-line activities, on-line seminars, homework activities and assessments. You will be paid by your employer for your time.

In either face-to-face or in an online format (e.g. Zoom meetings), you will be asked to:

- Complete an online knowledge quiz concerning individual supported living, prior to and on completion of the professional development training program
- Work with a person with disability, their family and/or support staff to develop an ISL plan
- Participate in conciliation meetings using the ISL framework
- Participate in two audio recorded individual interviews with a Research Assistant concerning your experience of the ISL training program

The surveys will ask you for your demographic data including your age, gender and professional experience. The details of your role, your understanding of what constitutes a quality ISL and; the goals and outcomes of the training program.

While no incentives will be provided to you by participating in this training program, this could be perceived as an opportunity for you to develop professionally.

## Risks Anticipated and Safeguards Provided

This project has been approved by the University of Melbourne Human Research Ethics Committee.

There are no anticipated risks to you above those normally associated with participating in a professional development training program and interview.

Declining the opportunity to participate in this training program will not disadvantage you in respect to your participation in future professional development opportunities.

If participation in this project causes you concern or raises issues for you, we encourage you to identify and make contact with appropriate services to address your needs at the time. This could be your supervisor, your GP or other appropriate services.

Your privacy will be maintained in the strictest confidence. No identifying information will be released by the University as part of the research report. When writing reports, presenting project findings or publishing articles, only aggregate data will be reported. The data from this research will be kept securely stored at the University of Melbourne, it could be used in future projects that are closely related to this project, or in the same general area of research as this project and will be destroyed after 5 years from the last publication.

Due to the small sample size, it cannot be guaranteed that people who are familiar with the organisation will not identify you. Any information/data that has the potential to identify individuals or organisations will be omitted from reports.

The research will be monitored by a project management group comprising of representatives from Araluen, Able Australia and the University of Melbourne, as well as the University of Melbourne Human Research Ethics Committee (see details below).

## Participation is Voluntary

You have the right to decline to participate or discontinue participation at any stage. However, once data has been collected it cannot be withdrawn.

If you choose to register to participate in the current program, please complete the consent form by clicking on the link white arrow against the blue background below.

If you prefer to register for alternative professional development opportunities as they become available at your organisation, please close this page and notify your manager.

**Declining to participate in the current program will not disadvantage you with respect to your participation in future professional development opportunities.**

## Questions or Complaints

If you have any questions or concerns about the project, please contact:

Professor Keith R. McVilly

School of Social & Political Sciences, The University of Melbourne

Tel. 03 8344 5366; or

E-mail: keith.mcvilly@unimelb.edu.au

If you wish to participate, please click on the link provided below and a separate window to the consent form will open.

If you have any complaints about any aspect of the project, the way it is being conducted, or any questions about your rights as a research participant, then you can contact:

The Manager, Office of Research Ethics & Integrity

Telephone: +61 3 8344 2073

E-mail: [humanethics-complaints@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:humanethics-complaints@unimelb.edu.au)

Quoting the HREC Reference Number: 2056572.1

If participating in this research has resulted in you experiencing feelings of distress that exceed discomfort, we encourage you to seek support via your GP or Lifeline on 13 11 14.

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## Appendix 2 Consent form for people participating in the training program.



### CONSENT FORM

**To:**

Senior disability support practitioners

**Date:**

February 18, 2024

**Full Project Title:**

Individualised Supported Living: Development and evaluation of a training program

**Principal Researcher:**

Professor Keith McVilly

School of Social and Political Sciences

**Ethics ID:**

2056572.1

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research project.

By signing this form, you agree to:

1. Having read and understood the contents of the Plain Language Statement
2. Consent to participating in this research

Clicking 'yes, participate' and signing this form shows that you understand:

3. That participation in the study is voluntary. You have the right to decline or discontinue participation at any time. However, once data has been collected it cannot be withdrawn.

4. That by providing your consent, you are agreeing to the researchers collecting your experiences of individualised supported living. Your privacy will be maintained in the strictest confidence.
5. The data from this research will be kept securely stored at the University of Melbourne, may be used in future projects that are closely related to this project, or in the same general area of research as this project and will be destroyed after 5 years from the last publication.
6. That the interviews will be audio recorded.

Please enter and submit your details below. A member of the research team will contact you shortly.

First name

Telephone Email

Do you consent to being contacted about future research relating to this project?

- Yes
- No

Would you like a copy of reports that are published about this project?

- Yes
- No

Signature:

**SIGN HERE**

×

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clear

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## Appendix 3 Plain Language Statement for people having their living arrangement evaluated.



### PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT

**To:**

People engaging senior disability support practitioners involved in the evaluation of their living arrangement.

**Date:**

February 18, 2024

**Full Project Title:**

Individualised Supported Living: development and evaluation of a professional development program

**HREC ID:**

2056572.1

**Principal Researcher:**

Professor Keith McVilly

School of Social and Political Sciences

**You Have Been Contacted**

You have been identified as someone who engages disability support practitioners to provide planning and evaluation services relating to your living arrangement. You are therefore invited to participate in this research project. You can choose to have someone that you know and trust read through this form with you.

The aim of this project is to investigate the efficacy of a structured professional development program designed to build the capacity of members of the disability sector workforce to deliver and evaluate services guided by the implementation of the Individual Supported Living (ISL) Framework 2nd edition.

**What is ISL?**

An ISL arrangement is more than accommodation, it also incorporates the factors that create a *home* for an individual. People living in an ISL arrangement are encouraged to explore the characteristics that constitute a

*good life*. Some examples of characteristics explored, while also acknowledging the crucial role of your existing and future informal and formal support networks include:

- choosing where and with whom you live
- having a safe place to call home
- being involved in making decisions and having choice and control over your life
- receiving the right amount of supports at the right time- being able to access opportunities for personal growth and - being included in your community.

As part of this project; we also hope to better understand the experiences and outcomes that are achieved for people with disability and their family as a consequence of participating in an ISL facilitation process supported by staff who have undertaken ISL training.

An ISL evaluation might include the people that know you well, and people that you trust. With your consent, we will also ask them questions about your living arrangements. You can let us know who you would like to share information about your living arrangements.

Araluen and Able Australia have funded the University of Melbourne to develop the training programme and undertake the research.

## **What You Will Be Asked To Do**

You will be asked to participate in planning meeting with a senior disability support practitioner for a total of 90 minutes either face-to-face or online (e.g. via Zoom). During the meeting, you will discuss your current and desired future living arrangements.

You will then develop a plan with the senior disability support practitioner.

Later, you will be asked to participate in an audio recorded interview with a University of Melbourne Researcher about your experience of the ISL process and your plan.

While no incentives will be provided to you by participating in this research project, it could be an opportunity for you to progress your goals for individualised living in the future.

**Participating in this project does not guarantee you securing a high-quality ISL. Many people and supports need to be in place and it can take many years to achieve a high quality ISL.**

## **Risks Anticipated and Safeguards Provided**

This project has been approved by the University of Melbourne Human Research Ethics Committee.

There are no anticipated risks to you above those normally associated with participating in an interview or service planning process.

Declining the opportunity to participate in this research project will not disadvantage you in respect to your participation in future opportunities.

If participation in this project causes you concern or raises issues for you, we encourage you to identify and make contact with appropriate services to address your needs at the time. This could be your GP or other appropriate services.

Your privacy will be maintained in the strictest confidence. No identifying information will be released by the University as part of the research report. When writing reports, presenting project findings or publishing articles, only aggregate data will be reported. The data from this research will be kept securely stored at the University of Melbourne, it could be used in future projects that are closely related to this project, or in the same general area of research as this project and will be destroyed after 5 years from the last publication.

Due to the small sample size, it cannot be guaranteed that people who are familiar with the organisation will not identify you. Any information that has the potential to identify individuals or organisations will be omitted from reports.

The research will be monitored by a project management group comprising of representatives from Araluen, Able Australia and the University of Melbourne, as well as the University of Melbourne Human Research Ethics Committee (see details below).

### **Participation is Voluntary**

You have the right to decline to participate or discontinue participation at any stage. However, once data has been collected it cannot be withdrawn.

If you prefer to register for alternative supports as they become available, please close this page and notify your service provider.

Declining to participate in the current program will not disadvantage you with respect to your participation in future opportunities.

### **Questions or Complaints**

If you have any questions or concerns about the project, please contact:

Professor Keith R. McVilly

School of Social & Political Sciences, The University of Melbourne

Tel. 03 8344 5366; or

E-mail: keith.mcvilly@unimelb.edu.au

If you wish to participate, please click on the link provided below (white arrow against the blue background) and a separate window to the consent form will open.

If you have any complaints about any aspect of the project, the way it is being conducted, or any questions about your rights as a research participant, then you can contact:

The Manager, Office of Research Ethics & Integrity

Telephone: +61 3 8344 2073

E-mail: [humanethics-complaints@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:humanethics-complaints@unimelb.edu.au)

Quoting the HREC Reference Number: 2056572.1

If participating in this research has resulted in you experiencing feelings of distress that exceed discomfort, we encourage you to seek support via your GP or Lifeline on 13 11 14.

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## Appendix 4 Consent form for people having their living arrangement evaluated.



### CONSENT FORM

**To:**

People engaging senior disability support practitioners involved in the evaluation of their living arrangement.

**Date:**

February 18, 2024

**Full Project Title:**

Individualised Supported Living: Development and evaluation of a training program

**Principal Researcher:**

Professor Keith McVilly

School of Social and Political Sciences

**Ethics ID:**

2056572.1

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research project. You can choose to have someone that you know and trust support you when completing this form.

By signing this form, you agree to:

1. Having read and understood the contents of the Plain Language Statement
2. Consent to participating in this research

Clicking 'yes, participate' and signing this form shows that you understand:

3. That participation in the study is voluntary. You have the right to decline or discontinue participation at any time. However, once your data has been collected it cannot be withdrawn.
4. That by providing your consent, you are agreeing to the researchers collecting your experiences of individualised supported living. Your privacy will be maintained in the strictest confidence.
5. The data from this research will be kept securely stored at the University of Melbourne, may be used in future projects that are closely related to this project, or in the same general area of research as this project and will be destroyed after 5 years from the last publication.
6. That the interviews will be audio recorded.

Please enter your details below:

First name	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
Telephone	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
Email	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>

Please enter the details of the informal and formal supports that you consent to sharing your information for the purposes of evaluating your Individualised Supported Living arrangement:

	Name	Relationship to you	Phone number	Email address
Person 1	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
Person 2	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
Person 3	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
Person 4	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
Person 5	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
Person 6	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
Person 7	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
Person 8	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
Person 9	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
	Name	Relationship to you	Phone number	Email address
Person 10	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>

Do you consent to being contacted about future research relating to this project?

Yes

No

Would you like to receive a copy of any reports published about this project?

Yes

No

Signature:

SIGN HERE

---

Clear

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## Appendix 5 Plain Language Statement for family members or carers.



### PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT

**To:**

Family members or unpaid carers of a person with disability participating in an Individualised Supported Living evaluation

**Date:**

February 18, 2024

**Full Project Title:**

Individualised Supported Living: development and evaluation of a professional development program

**HREC ID:**

2056572.1

**Principal Researcher:**

Professor Keith McVilly

School of Social and Political Sciences

**You Have Been Contacted**

You have been identified as someone who supports an individual that engages disability support practitioners to provide planning and evaluation services relating to their living arrangement.

You are therefore invited to participate in this research project.

The aim of this project is to investigate the efficacy of a structured professional development program designed to build the capacity of members of the disability sector workforce to deliver and evaluate services guided by the implementation of the Individual Supported Living (ISL) Framework 2nd edition.

**What is ISL?**

An ISL arrangement is more than accommodation, it also incorporates the factors that create a *home* for an individual. People living in an ISL arrangement are encouraged to explore the characteristics that constitute a



*good life*. Some examples of characteristics explored, while also acknowledging the crucial role of your existing and future informal and formal support networks include:

- choosing where and with whom you live
- having a safe place to call home
- being involved in making decisions and having choice and control over your life
- receiving the right amount of supports at the right time- being able to access opportunities for personal growth and - being included in your community.

As part of this project; we also hope to better understand the experiences and outcomes that are achieved for people with disability and their family as a consequence of participating in an ISL facilitation process supported by staff who have undertaken ISL training.

Araluen and Able Australia have funded the University of Melbourne to develop the training programme and undertake the research.

### **What You Will Be Asked To Do**

You will be asked to participate in planning meeting with a senior disability support practitioner for a total of 90 minutes either face-to-face or online (e.g. via Zoom). During the meeting, you will discuss the current and desired future living arrangements of the person you support.

You will then develop a plan with the person you support and a senior disability support practitioner.

While no incentives will be provided to you by participating in this research project, it could be an opportunity for the person with disability that you support to progress their goals for individualised living in the future.

**Participating in this project does not guarantee the person with disability securing a high-quality ISL. Many people and supports need to be in place and it can take many years to achieve a high-quality ISL.**

### **Risks Anticipated and Safeguards Provided**

This project has been approved by the University of Melbourne Human Research Ethics Committee.

There are no anticipated risks to you above those normally associated with participating in an interview or service planning process.

Declining the opportunity to participate in this research project will not disadvantage you in respect to your participation or the person with disability that you support in future opportunities.

If participation in this project causes you concern or raises issues for you, we encourage you to identify and make contact with appropriate services to address your needs at the time. This could be your GP or other appropriate services.

Your privacy will be maintained in the strictest confidence. No identifying information will be released by the University as part of the research report. When writing reports, presenting project findings or publishing articles, only aggregate data will be reported. The data from this research will be kept securely stored at the University of

Melbourne, it could be used in future projects that are closely related to this project, or in the same general area of research as this project and will be destroyed after 5 years from the last publication.

The research will be monitored by a project management group comprising of representatives from Araluen, Able Australia and the University of Melbourne, as well as the University of Melbourne Human Research Ethics Committee (see details below).

### **Participation is Voluntary**

You have the right to decline to participate or discontinue participation at any stage. However, once data has been collected it cannot be withdrawn.

If you prefer to register for alternative supports as they become available, please close this page and notify the service provider of the person that you support.

Declining to participate in the current program will not disadvantage you or the person that you support with respect to participation in future opportunities.

### **Questions or Complaints**

If you have any questions or concerns about the project, please contact:

Professor Keith R. McVilly

School of Social & Political Sciences, The University of Melbourne

Tel. 03 8344 5366; or

E-mail: [keith.mcvilly@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:keith.mcvilly@unimelb.edu.au)

If you wish to participate, please click on the link provided below (white arrow against the blue background) and a separate window to the consent form will open.

If you have any complaints about any aspect of the project, the way it is being conducted, or any questions about your rights as a research participant, then you can contact:

The Manager, Office of Research Ethics & Integrity

Telephone: +61 3 8344 2073

E-mail: [humanethics-complaints@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:humanethics-complaints@unimelb.edu.au)

Quoting the HREC Reference Number: 2056572.1

If participating in this research has resulted in you experiencing feelings of distress that exceed discomfort, we encourage you to seek support via your GP or Lifeline on 13 11 14.

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## Appendix 6 Consent form for family members or carers.



### Default Question Block

#### CONSENT FORM

**To:**

Family member of unpaid carer of a person with disability participating in an Individualised Supported Living evaluation

**Date:**

February 18, 2024

**Full Project Title:**

Individualised Supported Living: Development and evaluation of a training program

**Principal Researcher:**

Professor Keith McVilly

School of Social and Political Sciences

**Ethics ID:**

2056572.1

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research project.

By signing this form, you agree to:

1. Having read and understood the contents of the Plain Language Statement
2. Consent to participating in this research

Clicking 'yes, participate' and signing this form shows that you understand:

1. That participation in the study is voluntary. You have the right to decline or discontinue participation at any time. However, once your data is collected it cannot be withdrawn.
2. That by providing your consent, you are agreeing to the researchers collecting your experiences of individualised supported living. Your privacy will be maintained in the strictest confidence.
3. The data from this research will be kept securely stored at the University of Melbourne, may be used in future projects that are closely related to this project, or in the same general area of research as this project and will be destroyed after 5 years from the last publication.

Please enter and submit your details below. A member of the research team will contact you shortly.

First name

Telephone Email

Do you consent to being contacted about future research relating to this project?

- Yes
- No

Would you like to receive a copy of any published reports relating to this project?

- Yes
- No

Signature:

**SIGN HERE**

×

---

clear

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## Appendix 7 Training program reading list.

### Essential readings

Cocks, E., & Thoresen, S. (2017). Individual Supported Living Manual. In (2nd ed.): Curtin University.

Cocks, E., Thoresen, S., McVilly, K., & O'Brien, P. (2017). Quality and Outcomes of Individual Supported Living (ISL) Arrangements for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities-Final Report.

McVilly, K., Dodevska, G., Crosbie, J., Cocks, E., Thoresen, S., Thomson, A., & O'Brien, P. (2017). You can't solve homelessness through housing alone. *Parity*, 30(4), 30-32.

