H&H Care SA Pty Ltd

SUPPORT WORKER TRAINING & WORKPLACE PROTOCOL

Supporting Independence in SIL Accommodation

Empowering Participants to Build Confidence, Skills and Control Over Their Daily Lives

Training Category: Supported Independent Living (SIL) – Daily Living Skills & Participant Independence
Applies To: All H&H Care SA Support Workers, Team Leaders and SIL Coordinators
Service Setting: Supported Independent Living Accommodation
Document Type: Staff Training Article & Proposed Workplace Protocol
Review Frequency: Annually or following relevant changes to NDIS requirements or organisational procedures

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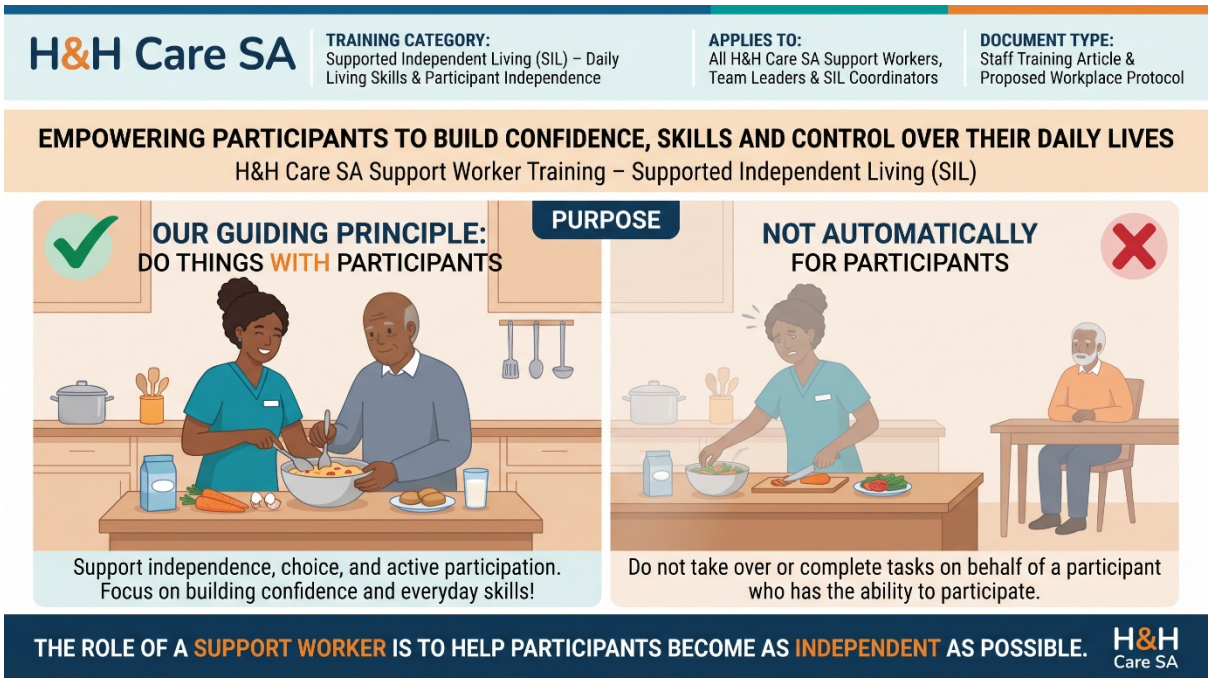
1. Purpose

At H&H Care SA, we believe that every person with a disability has the right to live with dignity, independence, choice and control over their daily life.



Supported Independent Living (SIL) is designed to assist NDIS participants with daily living tasks while developing and maintaining their skills, confidence and ability to make decisions.

The role of a support worker is not simply to complete tasks for participants. It is to help participants become as independent as possible, according to their individual abilities, goals, preferences and support needs.

Our guiding principle:

Do things with participants, not automatically for participants.

This means providing the right amount of assistance while encouraging participants to actively participate in their daily routines.

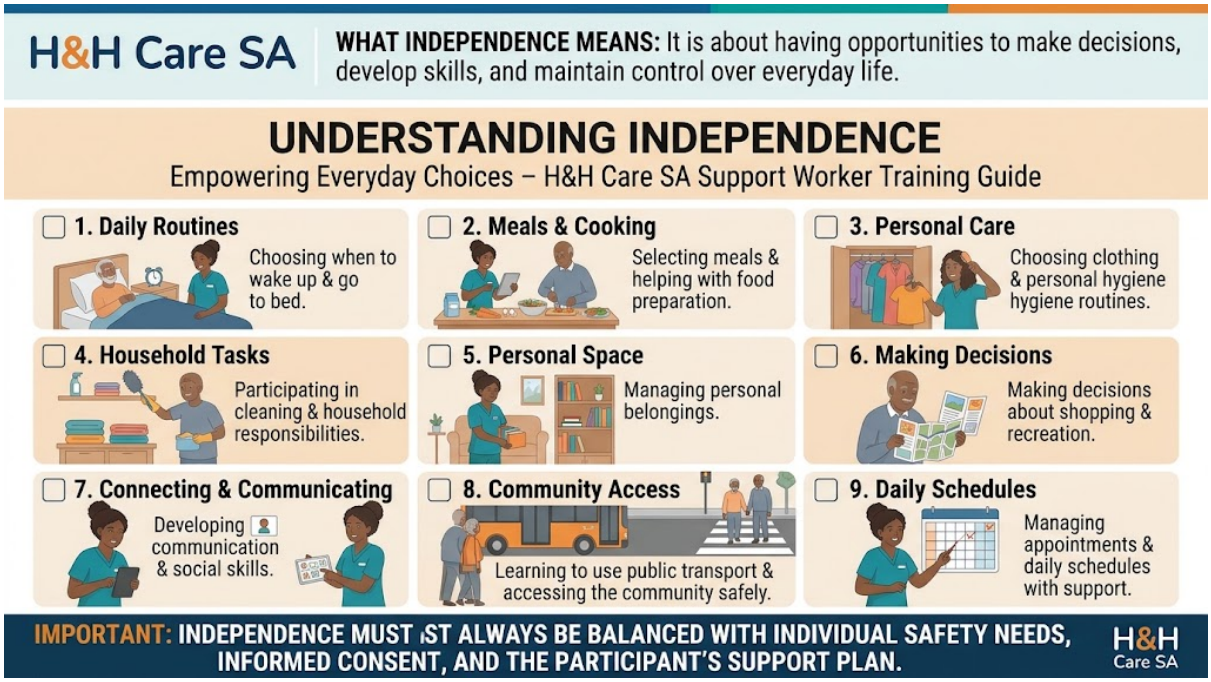
The purpose of this protocol is to establish clear expectations for H&H Care SA support workers when promoting independence within SIL accommodation.

2. Understanding Independence in SIL

Independence does not necessarily mean completing every task without assistance.

For some participants, independence may mean preparing their own meals. For others, it may mean choosing what to eat, selecting their clothing, communicating preferences or participating in household activities with support.

Independence is about having opportunities to make decisions, develop skills and maintain control over everyday life.



Examples of independence include:

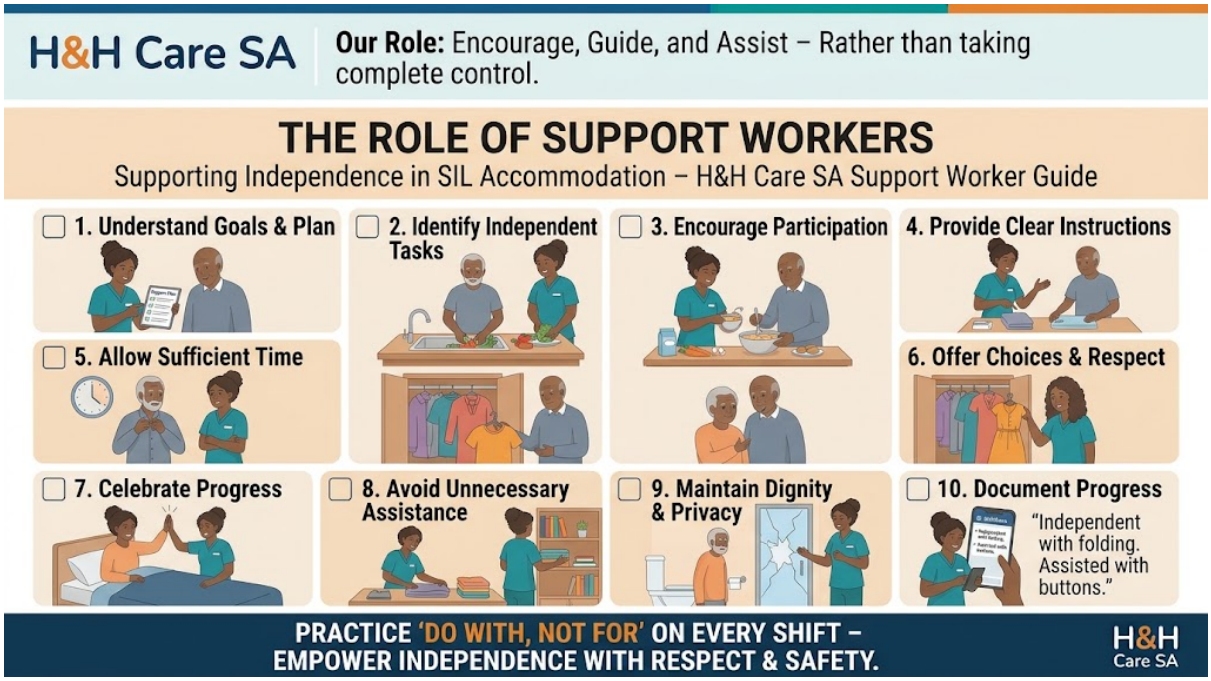
- Choosing when to wake up and go to bed.
- Selecting meals and helping with food preparation.
- Choosing clothing and personal hygiene routines.
- Participating in cleaning and household responsibilities.
- Managing personal belongings.
- Making decisions about shopping and recreational activities.
- Developing communication and social skills.
- Learning to use public transport or access the community safely.
- Managing personal appointments and daily schedules with appropriate support.

Support workers must recognise that each participant has different abilities and goals.

Important: Independence must always be balanced with individual safety needs, informed consent and the participant's support plan.

3. The Role of Support Workers in Promoting Independence

H&H Care SA support workers are responsible for encouraging, guiding and assisting participants rather than taking complete control of their daily activities.



Support workers must:

1. Understand each participant's individual goals and support plan.
2. Identify tasks the participant can complete independently.
3. Encourage participation in everyday activities.
4. Provide clear instructions and practical demonstrations where appropriate.
5. Allow sufficient time for participants to complete tasks.
6. Offer choices and respect individual preferences.
7. Recognise and celebrate progress without treating participants in a childish or patronising manner.
8. Avoid unnecessary assistance.
9. Maintain dignity, privacy and safety.
10. Document progress, achievements and any changes in support needs.

Example:

Instead of immediately preparing breakfast for a participant, a support worker might ask:

"Would you like to prepare your breakfast together today? You can choose what you want, and I can help with anything you find difficult."

This approach encourages participation, confidence and decision-making.

4. Supporting Independence in Daily Living Activities

4.1 Personal Hygiene and Grooming

Participants should be encouraged to participate in their personal care routines according to their abilities.

Support workers should:

- Encourage participants to brush their teeth independently where possible.
- Allow participants to select their clothing.
- Support showering and grooming while maintaining privacy.
- Provide verbal reminders or step-by-step guidance when needed.
- Avoid taking over tasks that participants can safely perform.

- Respect personal preferences, dignity and consent.

Example:

A participant can wash their face and brush their teeth but requires assistance with shaving.

The worker should encourage the participant to complete the independent tasks before assisting with shaving, with their consent.



4.2 Meal Preparation and Cooking

Meal preparation provides valuable opportunities to develop practical life skills.

Support workers should encourage participants to:

- Choose meals and contribute to meal planning.
- Prepare simple ingredients.
- Wash vegetables and fruit.
- Make sandwiches or prepare breakfast.
- Set the dining table.
- Assist with cleaning after meals.
- Learn basic kitchen safety and food hygiene.

Example:

Rather than cooking every meal without participant involvement, the worker may support a participant to prepare a sandwich or simple lunch.

The participant could select ingredients, arrange the food and clean their plate afterward.

Workers must follow food safety procedures and assess risks associated with knives, hot surfaces and electrical appliances.

4.3 Cleaning and Household Responsibilities

Living independently involves participating in maintaining a clean and comfortable home.

Support workers should encourage participants to assist with suitable household activities, such as:

- Making their beds.
- Organising personal belongings.
- Wiping tables and benches.
- Sorting laundry.
- Folding clothes.
- Putting away clean dishes.
- Keeping bedrooms tidy.
- Participating in household cleaning according to their abilities.

Important: Household tasks should be matched to individual abilities, preferences and goals. Participants must not be forced to complete tasks or made responsible for work beyond their capabilities.

4.4 Shopping and Money Management

Shopping is an opportunity to develop independence, communication and decision-making skills.

Support workers should:

- Encourage participants to create shopping lists.
- Support participants to choose products.
- Assist with comparing prices.

- Encourage appropriate budgeting skills.
- Allow participants to pay for purchases where possible.
- Support safe money handling.
- Respect participants' decisions about their personal spending.

Example:

A participant wants to purchase toiletries.

Instead of selecting and purchasing everything on their behalf, the worker should encourage the participant to choose preferred products and participate in payment.

Workers must follow H&H Care SA's financial management procedures and must never use participant funds for personal purposes.

4.5 Community Participation

Independence extends beyond the SIL home.

Participants should be supported to maintain relationships, access community activities and develop social confidence.

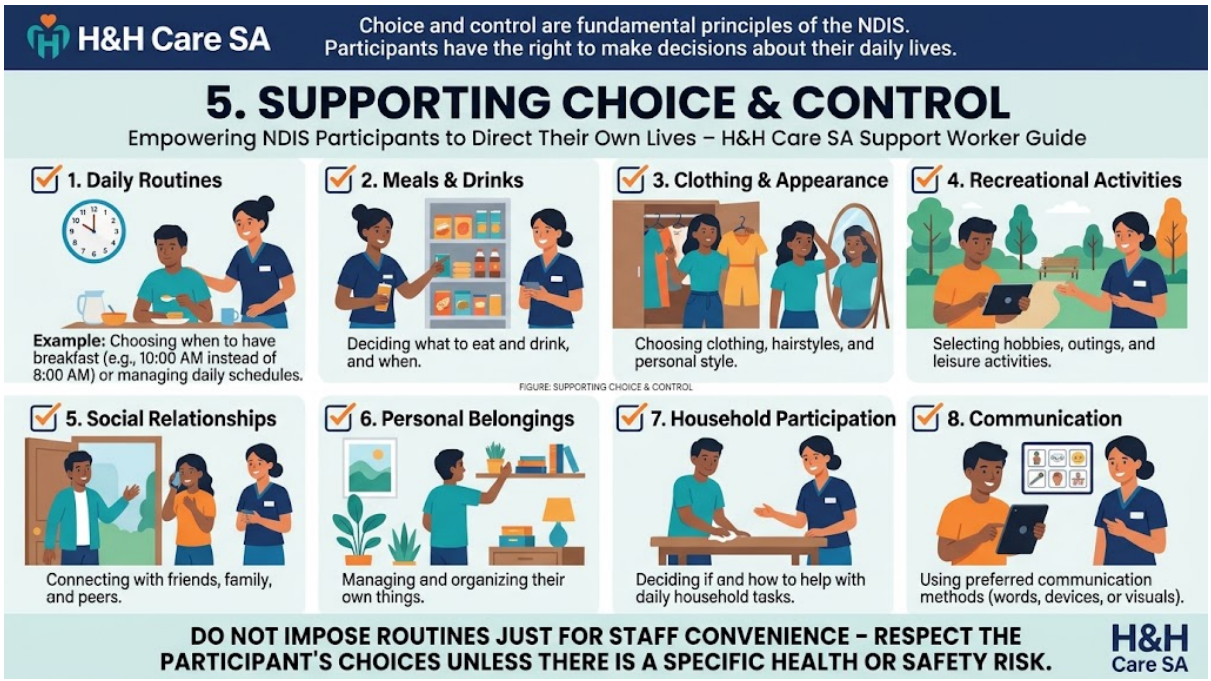
Activities may include:

- Visiting local cafés.
- Shopping.
- Walking in parks.
- Attending community events.
- Participating in recreational activities.
- Visiting friends and family.
- Attending appointments.
- Learning public transport skills where appropriate.

Workers should encourage participants to make choices about where they go and what activities they enjoy.

Community participation must be planned around the participant's preferences, assessed risks, available supports and funding arrangements.

5. Supporting Choice and Control



Choice and control are fundamental principles of the NDIS.

Participants have the right to make decisions about their daily lives, including decisions that differ from a worker's personal preferences.

Workers must respect choices about:

- Daily routines.
- Meals and drinks.
- Clothing and personal appearance.
- Recreational activities.
- Social relationships.
- Personal belongings.
- Household participation.
- Preferred communication methods.

Example:

A participant prefers to have breakfast at 10:00 am rather than 8:00 am.

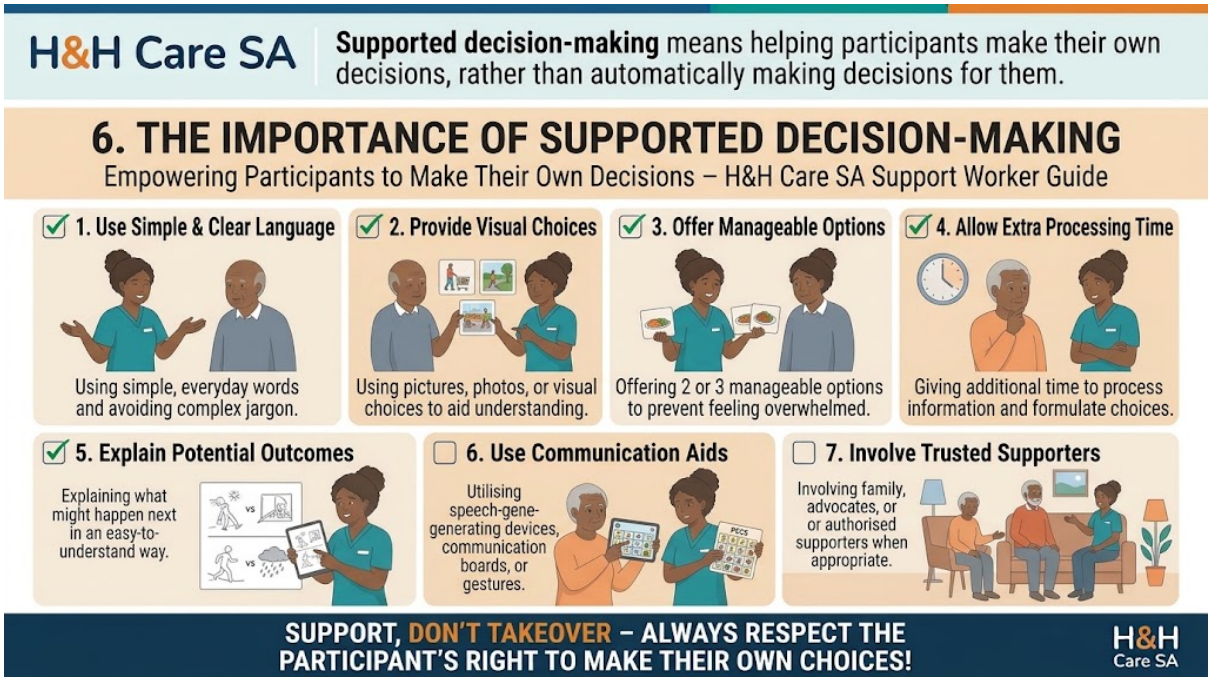
Unless there is a specific health or safety requirement, the worker should respect this preference and adjust the support routine where practicable.

Support workers should not impose unnecessary routines simply because they are more convenient for staff.

6. The Importance of Supported Decision-Making

Some participants may require additional assistance to understand information or communicate decisions.

Supported decision-making means helping participants make their own decisions rather than automatically making decisions for them.



Strategies include:

- Using simple and clear language.
- Providing pictures or visual choices.
- Offering manageable options.
- Allowing additional processing time.
- Explaining potential outcomes.
- Using communication aids.
- Involving trusted supporters where appropriate and authorised.

Example:

A participant has difficulty deciding what to wear.

Instead of selecting clothing without consultation, the worker could show two suitable outfits and ask which one the participant prefers.

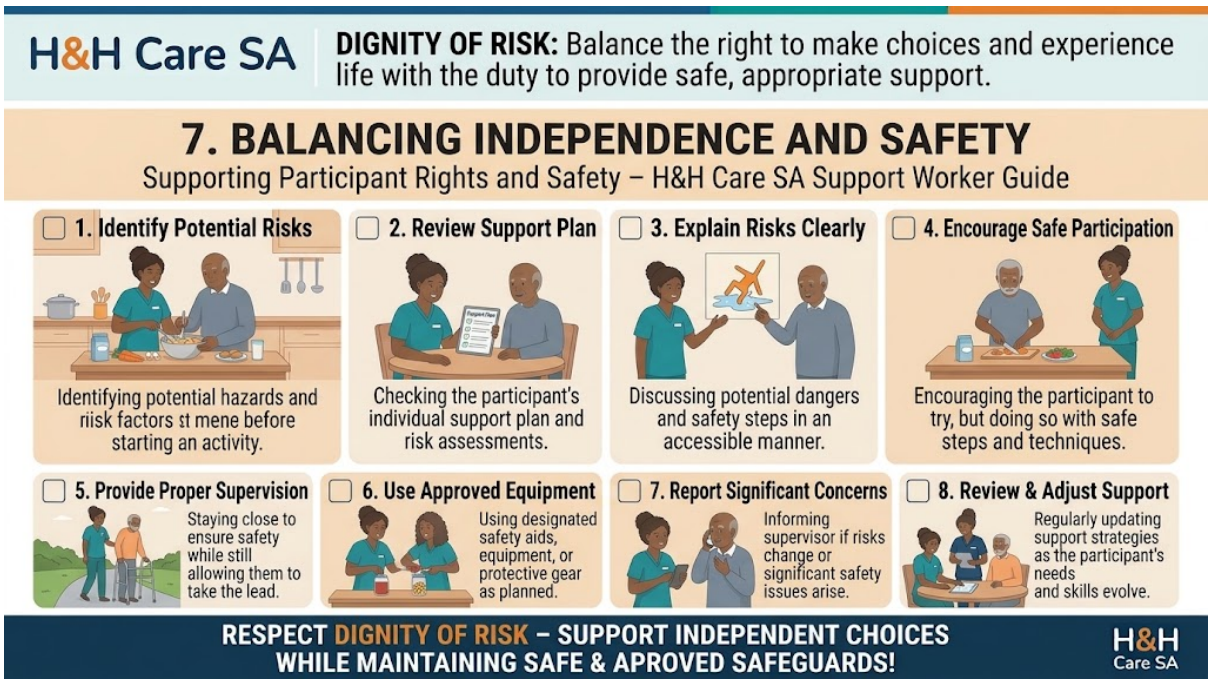
Workers must not assume that a person lacks decision-making capacity because they have a disability or communication difficulty.

7. Balancing Independence and Safety

Promoting independence does not mean ignoring risks.

Support workers must balance participants' rights to make choices with their duty to provide safe and appropriate support.

This is sometimes described as *dignity of risk*—recognising that people have the right to make informed choices and experience ordinary life opportunities.



Workers should:

1. Identify potential risks associated with an activity.
2. Review the participant's support plan and risk assessment.
3. Explain risks in an accessible way.
4. Encourage safe participation.
5. Provide appropriate supervision or assistance.
6. Use approved equipment and safety procedures.
7. Report significant concerns to the relevant supervisor.
8. Review support strategies when needs change.

Example:

A participant wants to prepare a hot drink independently.

If there is a risk of burns, the worker should consider safer equipment, appropriate guidance or supervision rather than automatically preventing the activity.

Any restrictions on a participant's freedom or activities must comply with applicable law, authorisation requirements and the participant's support arrangements.

8. Avoiding Over-Support and Dependency

One common challenge in SIL accommodation is providing more assistance than a participant actually needs.

Although this may appear helpful, consistently completing tasks for participants can reduce opportunities to practise skills and maintain independence.

Examples of over-support include:

- Dressing a participant who can dress independently.
- Preparing all meals without offering participation.
- Cleaning a participant's room without involving them.
- Making everyday decisions without asking the participant.
- Speaking on behalf of a participant who can communicate their own preferences.
- Rushing tasks because it is quicker for the worker to complete them.

Better practice

Support workers should ask:

"Can the participant do this independently?"

"Would verbal guidance be enough?"

"Can I assist with only the difficult part?"

"How can I help the participant practise this skill?"

Remember:

The goal is not to complete tasks as quickly as possible. The goal is to provide safe, person-centred support that promotes independence.

9. Supporting Independence in Shared SIL Accommodation

In shared SIL homes, participants may have different abilities, preferences, personalities and support needs.

Support workers must respect each participant as an individual.

Workers should:

- Respect private bedrooms and personal belongings.
- Encourage participation in shared household activities without forcing involvement.
- Support positive communication between housemates.
- Respect differences in daily routines.
- Promote fair access to shared spaces.
- Support conflict resolution respectfully.
- Avoid favouritism or unequal treatment.
- Maintain confidentiality between participants.

A participant should not lose their right to personal choice simply because they live in shared accommodation.

Example:

Two participants have different preferences for evening activities.

The worker should explore reasonable arrangements that respect both individuals rather than automatically deciding what everyone must do.

10. Building Daily Living Skills Through Consistent Support

Developing independence takes time, patience and consistency.

Workers should use approaches that suit each participant's learning style and support needs.

Recommended strategies

Step-by-step instruction: Break complex activities into smaller, manageable steps.

Demonstration: Show the participant how to complete a task.

Verbal prompting: Provide simple reminders or instructions when needed.

Visual support: Use pictures, checklists or schedules.

Positive feedback: Acknowledge effort and progress.

Repetition: Provide regular opportunities to practise.

Gradual reduction of assistance: Reduce prompts or physical support when the participant demonstrates they can safely complete more of the task.



Example: Learning to prepare breakfast

Week 1: Participant chooses breakfast and watches the preparation.

Week 2: Participant helps collect ingredients and utensils.

Week 3: Participant prepares part of the meal with assistance.

Week 4: Participant completes more steps with verbal prompting.

Future goal: Participant prepares a simple breakfast with the level of support required for safety.

This is an illustrative learning progression. Actual goals and timelines must be individualised.

11. Workplace Protocol: Supporting Independence During Every Shift

Step 1: Review the support plan

Before providing support, workers should understand:

- Participant goals.
- Current abilities.
- Required assistance.
- Communication preferences.

- Relevant health and safety risks.
- Agreed strategies for developing independence.

Step 2: Ask about preferences

At the beginning of the shift, communicate with the participant about their preferred activities and routine.

For example:

"What would you like to do this morning?"

"Would you like to help prepare breakfast?"

"Is there anything you would like to practise doing yourself today?"

Step 3: Encourage active participation

Allow the participant to complete tasks within their abilities.

Provide verbal guidance, demonstrations or physical assistance only when appropriate.

Step 4: Respect decisions

Respect the participant's choices and obtain consent before providing assistance.

Do not force participation in skill-building activities.

Step 5: Monitor safety

Follow the participant's support plan, risk assessments and relevant safety procedures.

Adjust assistance according to the participant's needs.

Step 6: Record progress

Document meaningful observations, including:

- Activities completed.
- Tasks performed independently.
- Type and level of support provided.
- Skills practised.
- Participant choices and preferences.
- Progress toward identified goals.
- Any difficulties or safety concerns.

Step 7: Communicate with the team

Share relevant information through approved handover and reporting processes to promote consistent support.

12. Documentation and ShiftCare Progress Notes

Accurate documentation helps H&H Care SA monitor participant progress and maintain continuity of care.



Case notes should describe what the participant actually did and what support was required.

Example 1 – Meal preparation

"Supported participant with preparing breakfast. Participant independently selected preferred food and collected ingredients from the kitchen. Verbal prompts were provided to assist with meal preparation. Participant completed most steps independently and required assistance with handling hot items. Encouraged participation in cleaning the dining area afterward. Participant appeared satisfied with completing the activity."

Example 2 – Household skills

"Encouraged participant to participate in tidying their bedroom and organising personal belongings. Participant independently folded clothes and placed them in the wardrobe with occasional verbal prompting. Positive feedback was provided for participation. No safety concerns were observed."

Example 3 – Community participation

"Supported participant with community access and shopping. Participant selected preferred personal items and participated in making payment with verbal guidance. Encouraged independent decision-making throughout the outing. Participant appeared happy and engaged well with the activity."

Example 4 – Participant choice

"Participant declined participation in the planned household activity and requested time to relax. Respected the decision and offered an alternative opportunity later in the day. Participant subsequently chose to assist with preparing lunch. Support was provided according to the participant's preferences and abilities."

These examples are for training purposes only. Workers must document actual events and must not copy sample notes as records of completed support.

13. Professional Responsibilities and Boundaries

H&H Care SA support workers must:

1. Follow participant support plans and agreed goals.
2. Promote dignity, independence and choice.
3. Obtain consent before providing assistance.
4. Maintain professional boundaries.
5. Respect privacy and confidentiality.
6. Avoid unnecessary control over participants' daily lives.
7. Use safe and appropriate support techniques.
8. Report changes in participant abilities or support needs.
9. Document support accurately.
10. Communicate respectfully with participants, families and colleagues.

Workers must never use threats, punishment, humiliation or unauthorised restrictive practices to make participants complete activities.

14. Training Scenarios

Scenario A: Participant does not want to clean their bedroom

A participant refuses to tidy their bedroom when asked.

Correct response: Respect the decision, explore whether assistance or a different time would help, and encourage participation without pressure.

Incorrect response: Threatening the participant, forcing them to clean or removing privileges as punishment.

Scenario B: Participant wants to cook independently

A participant wants to prepare lunch but has limited cooking experience.

Correct response: Review relevant risks, provide appropriate guidance and supervision, and encourage participation in safe cooking tasks.

Incorrect response: Automatically refusing the request without considering ways to support safe participation.

Scenario C: Participant takes longer to get dressed

A participant can dress independently but needs additional time.

Correct response: Allow sufficient time and provide assistance only when needed or requested.

Incorrect response: Dressing the participant unnecessarily because the worker wants to finish quickly.

Scenario D: Participant wants to choose their own activities

A participant prefers going for a walk rather than joining a planned group activity.

Correct response: Respect the preference and explore whether the walk can be safely accommodated within available support arrangements.

Incorrect response: Insisting that the participant must follow the group simply because it is easier for staff.

15. Staff Knowledge Check

Question 1: What is the main purpose of promoting independence in SIL?

Answer: To support participants to maintain and develop skills, confidence, choice and control over daily life.

Question 2: Should support workers complete tasks for participants simply because it is faster?

Answer: No. Workers should encourage participation and provide only the assistance appropriate to the participant's needs and safety.

Question 3: What should workers do if a participant wants to try a new activity that involves some risk?

Answer: Review the support plan and risk assessment, explain the risks and explore safe ways to support participation.

Question 4: Can a participant refuse to participate in a household activity?

Answer: Yes. Workers must respect the participant's rights and preferences while following relevant support plans and addressing any significant safety concerns.

Question 5: Why is accurate documentation important?

Answer: It helps monitor progress toward goals, identify changing support needs and maintain consistent support across the team.

16. Supervisor and Team Leader Responsibilities

H&H Care SA supervisors and SIL team leaders should:

- Ensure workers understand individual participant goals and support plans.
- Provide appropriate induction and ongoing training.
- Review support strategies and risk assessments.
- Encourage consistent approaches between staff members.
- Monitor participant progress and feedback.
- Address practices that unnecessarily limit independence.
- Support workers to recognise and report safety concerns.
- Review whether support is helping participants maintain or develop their daily living skills.

Team leaders should encourage regular discussion about how staff can improve opportunities for participant choice, participation and independence.

17. H&H Care SA Commitment to Independent Living

At H&H Care SA, we recognise that independence looks different for every participant.

Some people may develop the skills to complete daily activities with minimal support. Others may continue to require significant assistance while still exercising meaningful choice and control.

Our responsibility is to recognise each person's abilities, respect their decisions and create opportunities for them to participate in everyday life.

We are committed to delivering support that builds confidence, maintains skills and promotes dignity.

Our commitment:

We encourage, rather than control.

We guide, rather than take over.

We support choice, rather than make unnecessary decisions for others.

We promote independence while maintaining safety, dignity and respect.

Every interaction is an opportunity to empower a participant.

H&H CARE SA – SUPPORT WORKER TRAINING

Topic: Supporting Independence in SIL Accommodation

Core Message:

"Do With, Not For – Support Independence, Respect Choice, Build Confidence."