Writing positive behaviour support plans using Plain Language accessible slides

# Slide 1

## Writing positive behaviour support plans using Plain Language

Sarah Nicoll

NDS National Practice Lead – Zero Tolerance Initiative

Supported through grant funding from the Australian Government

# Slide 2

## Pre-workshop self-assessment

On a scale of 1 to 5 rate how easy are your plans to understand and use:

1 being difficult e.g. my positive behaviour support plans, whilst targeting the critical areas for the promotion of skill development, the need for improved communication systems and the reduction of any restrictive practices, may need work on how easily comprehensible and lucid they are to a myriad of audiences.

5 being easy e.g. plans are: clear, well laid out, and easy to use.

# Slide 3

## Learning Outcomes from today

Part one

1. Learn about Plain Language
2. Why Plain Language is important and how it applies to PBS plans

Part two

1. Learn steps for Plain Language
2. How to include practical strategies
3. How to include strength-based strategies
4. Being aware of what we didn't cover today

# Slide 4

Image of Chrissie Maher, 1979. Plain English Campaign. [Born to Crusade image PDF](http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/files/born_to_crusade.pdf)

# Slide 5

## Plain Language

A communication is in plain language if its wording, structure, and design are so clear that the intended audience can easily:

* find what they need,
* understand what they find, and
* use that information

Plain Language Association International (2020) [What is plain language?,](https://plainlanguagenetwork.org/plain-language/what-is-plain-language/) Plain website, accessed 8 February2020

# Slide 6

Some people are concerned that Plain Language might:

* water down their meaning
* risk poor implementation
* be damaging to their credibility, and
* take extra time (and money).

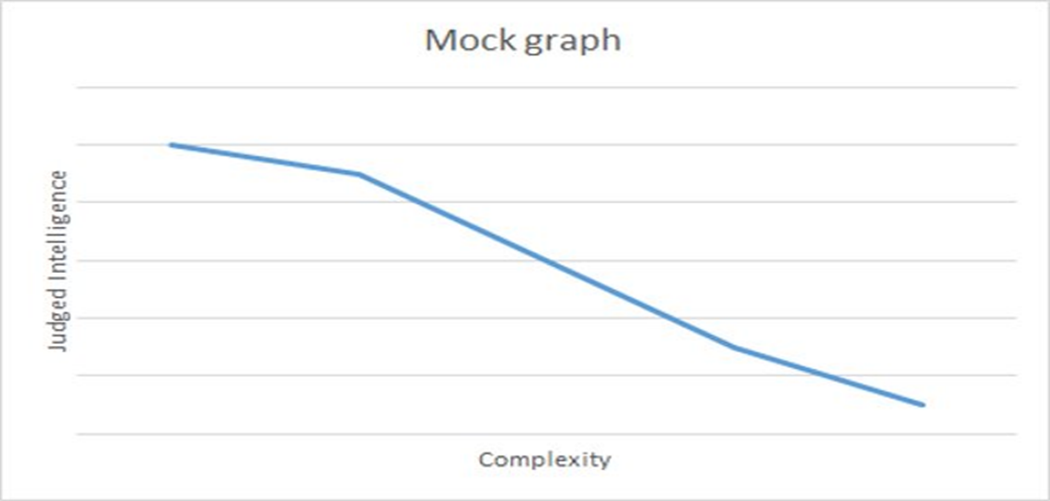
# Slide 7

Image of NIH Stroke Scale – [accessible version can be found on NIH website](https://www.ninds.nih.gov/Disorders/Patient-Caregiver-Education/Preventing-Stroke/Stroke-Scales-and-Related-Information)

# Slide 8

Decorative image omitted

# Slide 9



Oppenheimer, D.M. (2006). Consequences of erudite vernacular utilized irrespective of necessity: problems with using long words needlessly. Applied Cognitive Psychology, 20, 139-156.

# Slide 10

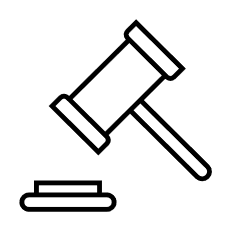
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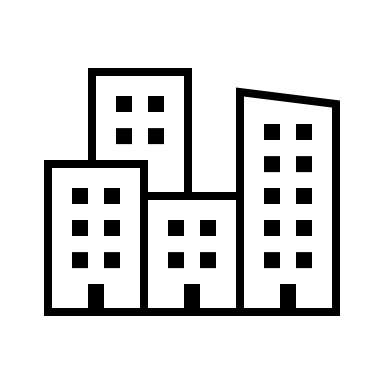
# Slide 11

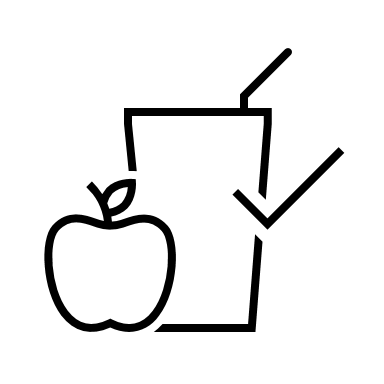
## Who uses Plain Language?

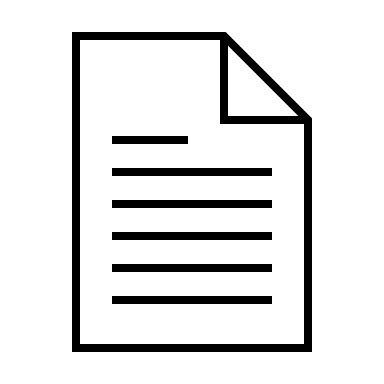
# Slide 12

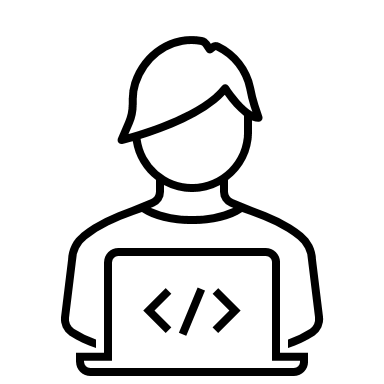
## Who uses Plain Language?











Professionals who want their message to be understood and actioned

# Slide 13

## Why - we want people to understand

“Human relationships depend on communication.

Bad writing is a barrier to communication too often clarity and simplicity are overwhelmed by pompous words, long sentences and endless paragraphs.”

Margaret Thatcher, Former Prime Minister, Britain

Accessed at [U.K. Plain English webpage](http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/about-us/quotes.html) on 15/02/2021

Decorative image omitted.

# Slide 14

## Why - it is the just thing to do

"It is a matter of social justice that the ~~legal~~ (or the behaviour support) profession communicates effectively with the community, as it is fundamentally important that everyone affected by the ~~law~~ (or a PBSP) should be able to understand it.

Unintelligible language not only confuses and alienates people, it causes them to become cynical about institutions."

The Hon. P. D. Cummins AM Chair Victorian Law Reform Commission October 2017

Accessed at [Plain English and the Law - the 1987 report Victorian Law Reform Commission](http://lawreform.vic.gov.au/projects/plain-english-and-law-1987-report) on 15/02/2021

Decorative image omitted.

# Slide 15

## Why – to meet the PBS Capability Framework

### 2. Functional Assessment

2.15 Adapt assessment terminology and systems to the needs of the target audience

### 3. Planning

3.12 Write a behaviour support plan in a way that is usable by those implementing it

3.14 Develop data collection systems that objective, understandable and usable by the key people

Note: Always discuss your practice with your supervisor to ensure best practice and you meet standards.

# Slide 16

## Plain Language and Easy Read

They are not the same thing

# Slide 17

## Plain Language

Plain Language is intended for a general audience. 44% of Australian adults have a low reading level

Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013

## Easy Read

Easy-to-read information is important for people with intellectual disabilities.

Others may also find it helpful:

* People with dyslexia.
* People not familiar with English.

# Slide 18

## Plain Language

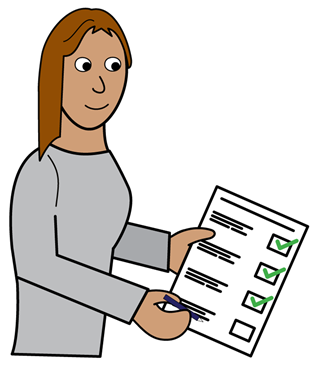
### The role of behaviour support practitioners

Behaviour support practitioners help people with disability to have a better quality of life.

This is the most important part of our job.

### Easy Read

What does a behaviour support practitioner do?

 They find out what is important to you

 They help you have a good life

# Slide 19

## Steps for creating Plain English plans

# Slide 20

## Plain Language

A communication is in plain language if its **wording**, **structure**, and **design** are so clear that the intended audience can easily:

* **find** what they need,
* **understand** what they find, and
* **use** that information

Plain Language Association International (2020) [What is plain language?](https://plainlanguagenetwork.org/plain-language/what-is-plain-language/), PLAIN website, accessed 8 February 2020

# Slide 21

## Steps for creating Plain Language plans

1. **Think of your audience.**
2. Simplify font, layout and design.
3. Use simple language and structure.
4. Test it with your audience.

Modified from [Five Steps to Plain Language - Center for Plain Language website](https://centerforplainlanguage.org/learning-training/five-steps-plain-language/) sourced 8 February 2021

# Slide 22

## 1. Think of your audience

### How people read

People with higher literacy might:

* scan documents
* take in information at the edges of their vision
* tend to read a lots of information
* not have time for lengthy, complex content.

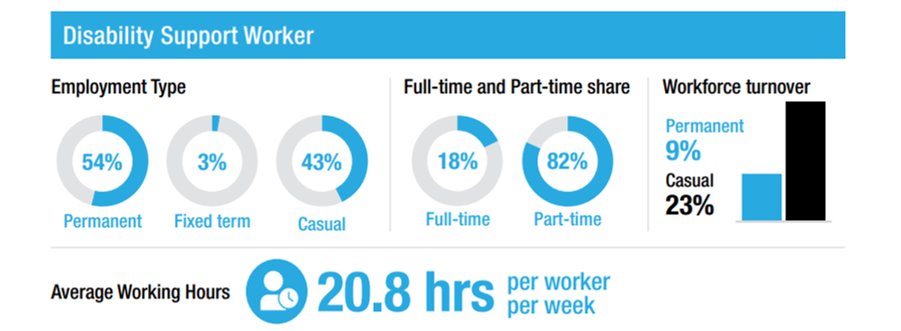
People with lower literacy might:

* read every word to ensure the message is not missed
* find it hard to keep the ideas shared in previous pages or paragraphs in mind
* skip sections if the message is not clear straight away.

# Slide 23

## 1. Think of your audience

### Disability Support Workers



Extract: NDS Workforce Census Snapshot: 2020

# Slide 24

## 1. Think of your audience

### Teachers and Stress

“In Australia, as in other countries, the incidence of teacher stress and burnout is a cause for serious concern”

Teachers reported:

* irritability at home (59%)
* irritability in classroom (55%)
* general anxiety (64%) and
* feelings of powerlessness (45%)

Howard & Johnson, 2004 p399 cited in Faleki, D. (2015) Teacher Stress and Wellbeing Literature Review.

# Slide 25

## 1. Think of your audience

### Families

High psychological distress:

* 27% primary carers
* 11% general population

Jiali Wang & Wei Du. (2019) Factors associated with high psychological distress in primary carers of people with disability. Australian Journal of General Practice. Volume 48, (4). doi: 10.31128/AJGP-04-18-4559

# Slide 26

## Your audience is:

* Stressed
* Time poor
* Juggling the needs of others/many
* Overwhelmed

Decorative images omitted.

# Slide 27

“Traditionally good readers blamed a document if they couldn’t understand it, while poor readers blamed themselves.”

Tasmanian Government Communications (2012) [Plain language in communication: guide](http://www.communications.tas.gov.au/channels/publishing/publications/plain_language_in_communication_guide), Tasmanian Government Communications website, accessed 10 February 2021

# Slide 28

## A little more on your audience

'Tom' from the Zero Tolerance films – Recognising Restrictive Practices



# Slide 29

## Steps for creating Plain Language plans

1. Think of your audience.
2. **Simplify font, layout and design.**
3. Use simple language and structure.
4. Test it with your audience.

Modified from [Five Steps to Plain Language, Center for Plain Language website](https://centerforplainlanguage.org/learning-training/five-steps-plain-language/) sourced 8 February 2021

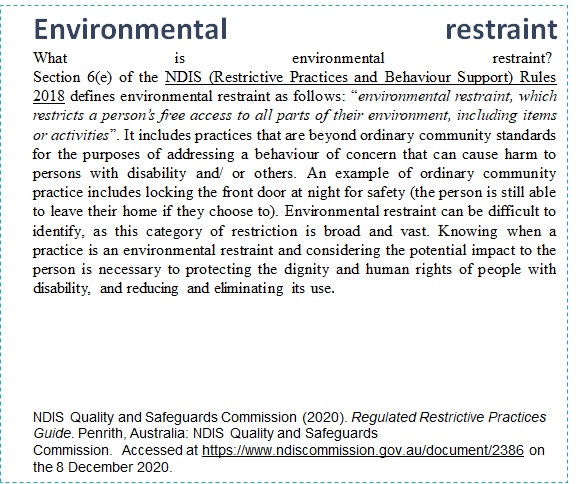
# Slide 30

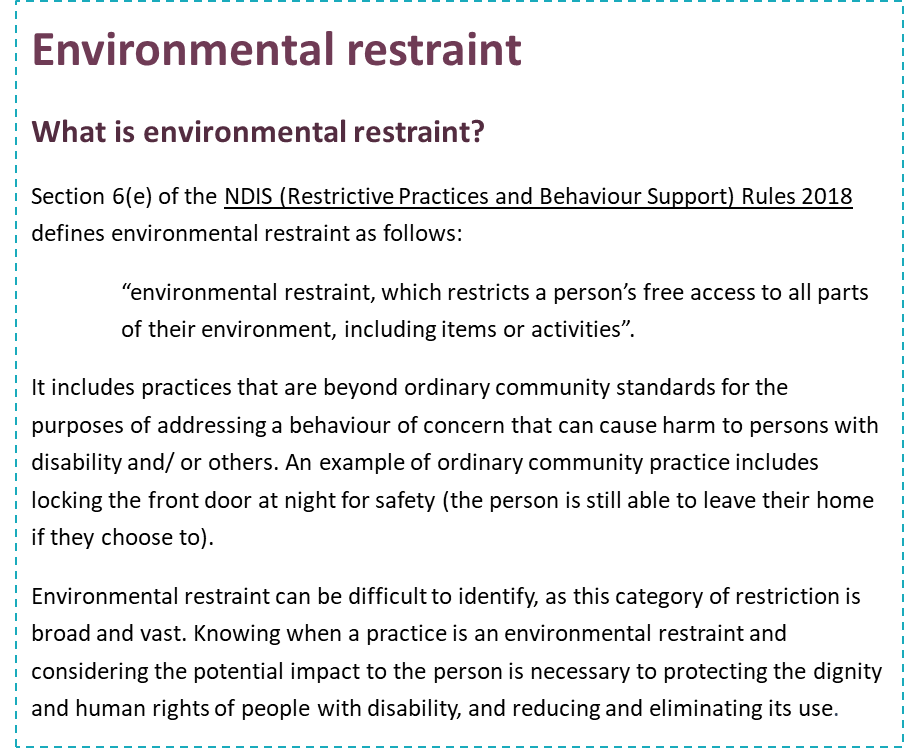
Nation shudders at large block of uninterrupted text, The Onion, 3 March 2010

Decorative image omitted

# Slide 31

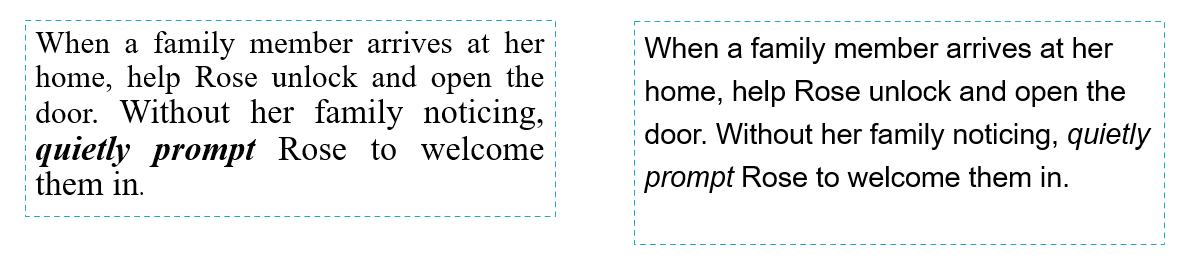
## Which Regulated Restrictive Practices Guide do you want to read?

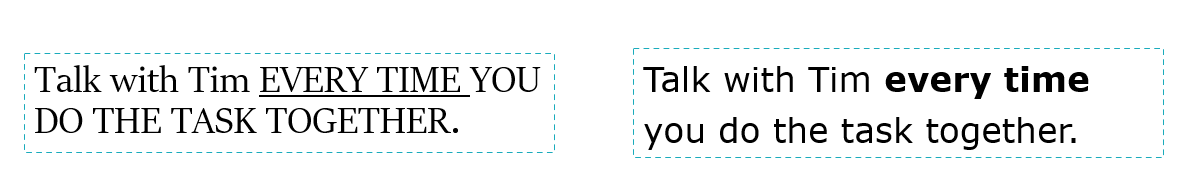




# Slide 32

## 2. Simplified font, layout and design





# Slide 33

## 2. Simplified font, layout and design

* Meaningful headings
* Use short paragraphs
* Some experts suggest using a 1.5 line spacing
* Use some white space between key points.
* Justify to the left



# Slide 34

## 2. Simplified font, layout and design

### Fonts

* Use a consistent font.
* Use simple Sans Serif font like:
* Arial,
* Veranda, or
* Calibri



# Slide 35

## 2. Simplified font, layout and design

## Fonts

Do not use full capitals. THIS IS HARD TO READ.

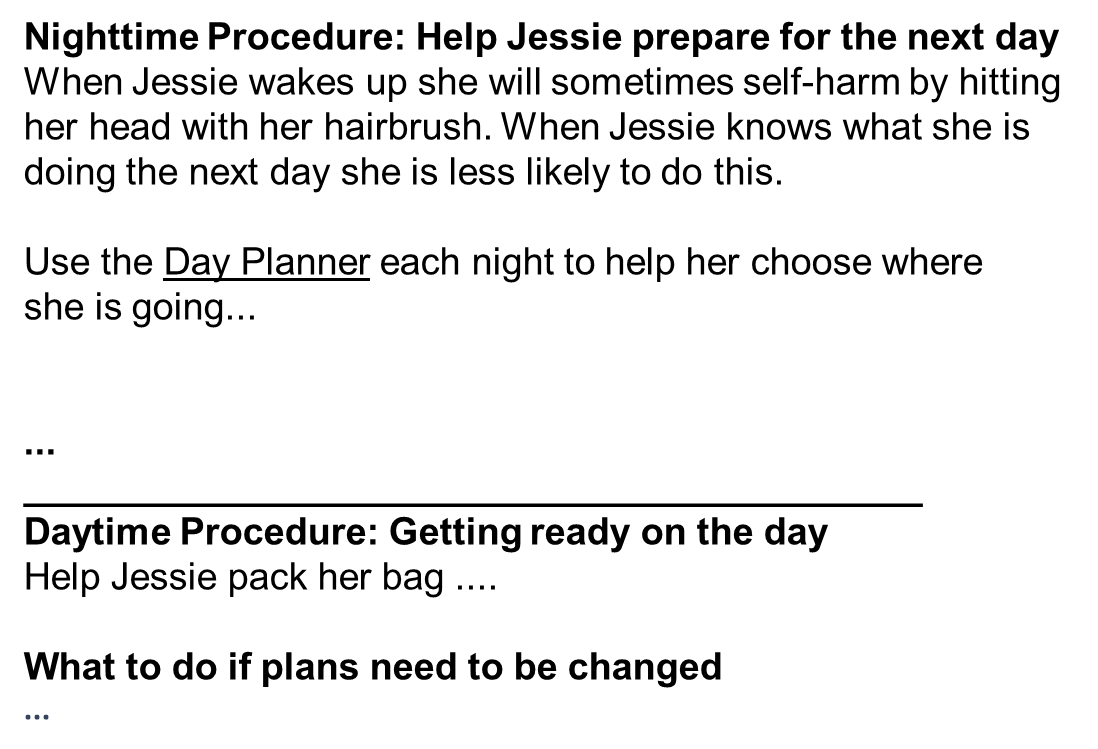
Example (use of bold or underline):

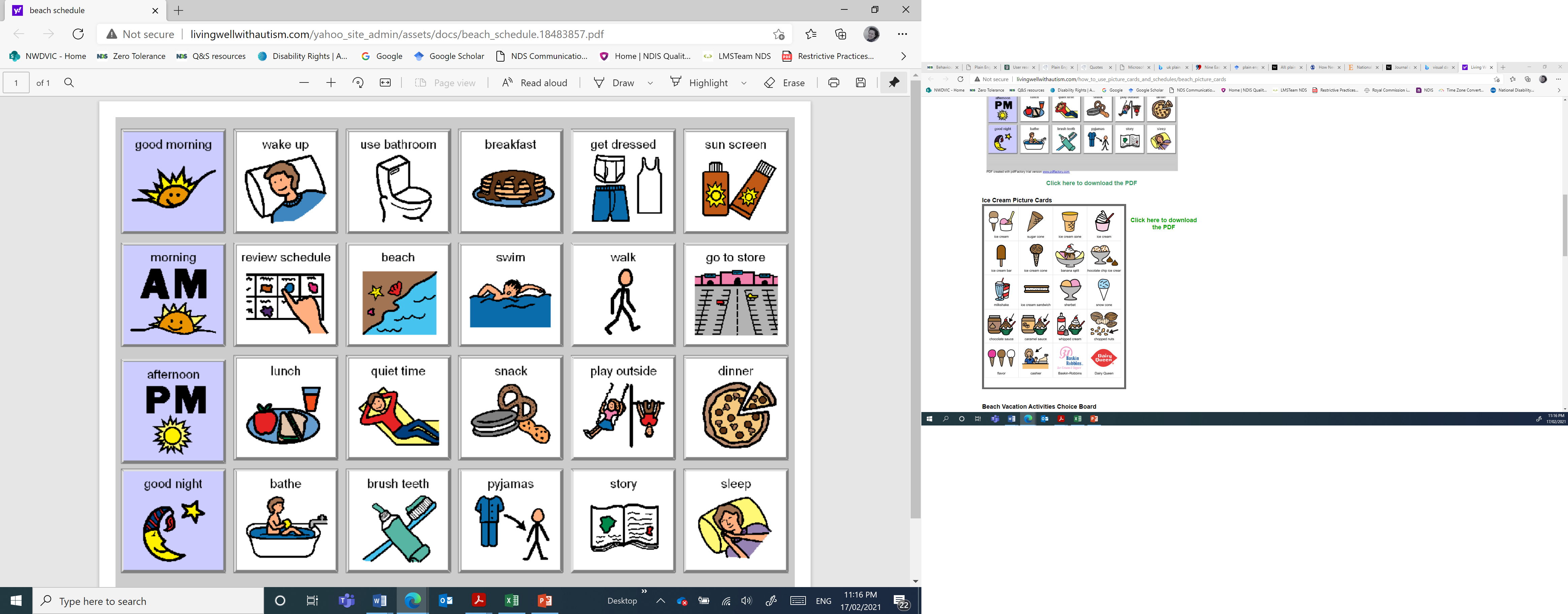
Talk with Tim **every time** you do the task together.

Talk with Tim every time you will do the task together.

# Slide 36

## 2. Simplified font, layout and design





Day Planner Sample from [Living Well with Autism website](http://livingwellwithautism.com/)

# Slide 37

## 2. Simplified font, layout and design

### Font

* Use a consistent simple font
* Do not use full capitals.

**Layout**

* Use meaningful headings
* Break the content up into short sections
* Use short paragraphs
* Use bullet point lists.

### Design

* Use white space between key points
* Some experts suggest using 1.5 line spacing
* Justify to the left.

# Slide 38

## Steps for creating Plain Language plans

1. Think of your audience.
2. Simplify font, layout and design.
3. **Use simple language and structure.**
4. Test it with your audience.

Modified from [Five Steps to Plain Language, Center for Plain Language website](https://centerforplainlanguage.org/learning-training/five-steps-plain-language/) sourced 8 February 2021

# Slide 39

## 3. Use simple language and structure

* reinforced
* function
* PBSP
* environmental
* antecedent
* escalation

Avoid jargon or if needed explain specialist terms

# Slide 40

## 3. Use simple language and structure

A number of: some, many, few

Assist: help, support, guide

Cease: stop, end

Cognisant of: aware of, know

Prior to: before

Australian government (2021) [Plain language and word choice, Style Manual webpage](https://www.stylemanual.gov.au/format-writing-and-structure/clear-language-and-writing-style/plain-language-and-word-choice) Accessed at 22 February 2021

# Slide 41

## 3. Use simple language and structure

1. Cross out what is not needed.
2. Highlight what is important.

Example text:

The preparation of the day bag is essential to avoiding escalation with Jessie. Staff should prepare the day bag with all the things she might need. It should have a water bottle, a small snack, her wallet, emergency information, and any small items from her statue collection that Jessie wants to take with her when she goes to the shops or the beach.

# Slide 42

## 3. Use simple language and structure

1. Cross out what is not needed.

Crossed out:

‘The preparation of the day bag is essential to avoiding escalation with Jessie. Staff should …. prepare the day bag with all the things she might need.’

1. Highlight what is important.

Highlighted:

‘when she goes to the shops or the beach.’

# Slide 43

## 3. Use simple language and structure

Example 1:

~~The preparation of the day bag is essential to avoiding escalation with Jessie. Staff should~~ assist Jessie to ~~prepare the day bag with all the things she might need~~. It should have a water bottle, a small snack, her wallet, emergency information, and any small items from her statue collection that Jessie wants to take with her **when she goes to the shops or the beach**.

Example 2:

Help Jessie pack her bag.

Pack:

* a water bottle
* a small snack
* her wallet
* emergency information, and
* 2 or 3 statues from her collection, if she wants these.

# Slide 44

## 3. Use simple language and structure

**Active** voice tell who is doing what.

They can help readers take responsibility.

**Passive** voice can send the reader backwards looking for extra information.

They can sometimes be confusing.

# Slide 45

## 3. Use simple language and structure

### Passive voice

* Handwashing needs to be supported by staff each morning before Lenny goes to the toilet
* Breakfast needs to be cooked by Ellie, alongside staff each day.

### Active voice

* Support Lenny to wash his hands before he goes to the toilet in the morning.
* Help Ellie cook breakfast each day.

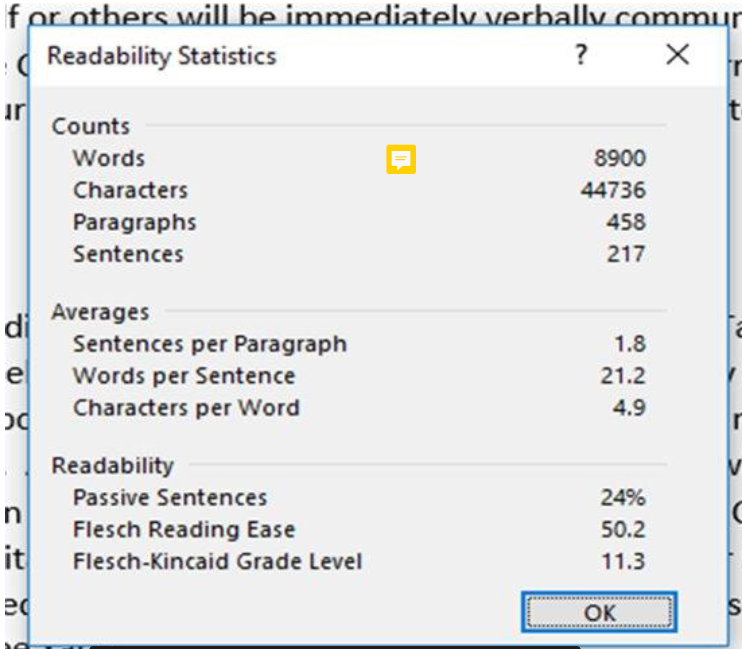
# Slide 46

## 3. Use simple language and structure

* Put the important information first – the top of the page, start of the paragraph, start of a sentence.
* You can use a conversational tone - 'you', 'we', the person's name.
* Use familiar words. For example, 'Daily notes', 'Day Book'.
* Use everyday words.
* Use the same terms consistently.
* Use active sentences.
* Leave out details that distract. Even if they are interesting.
* Use shorter sentences. Aim for an average of 15 to 20 words.
* Avoid jargon. Define specialist terms.

# Slide 47

# Check readability



# Slide 48

## Steps for creating Plain Language plans

1. Think of your audience.
2. Simplify font, layout and design.
3. Use simple language and structure.
4. **Test it with your audience.**

Modified from [Five Steps to Plain Language, Center for Plain Language website](https://centerforplainlanguage.org/learning-training/five-steps-plain-language/) sourced 8 February 2021

# Slide 49

## 4. Test it with your audience

### Times you might share and test your plan (and Plain English)

* Do your assessment tools make sense?
* Does this sound like the person? Likes? Dislikes? Interests?

**Training and coaching**

* Review the data with the team/carers
* Check in about positive and preventative strategies
* Are any R.P. protocols crystal clear?
* Before lodging

# Slide 50

## 4. Test it with your audience

* Build trust
* Model collaboration
* Enhance ownership
* Test social validity
* Collect feedback - along the way
* Flag/prime attention to important information
* Build familiarity and confidence
* Reinforce good practice
* Generate curiosity and 'buy-in'

# Slide 51

**Writing practical strategies**

**Slide 52**

## Would you buy this jumper?

Decorative image omitted

Washing label reads:

* Hand wash cold
* Only non-chlorine bleach when needed
* Line dry
* Do not iron
* Do not dryclean
* Profession machines wash or hand wash recommended
* Use liquid/silk detergent
* Don not use bleach and detergent with fluorescing agent
* Rinse well with water
* Avoid using household washing machines and spin dyers
* Drip dry in a location away from direct sunlight
* Do not store damp
* Run and stretch the down to regain its loft due to the natural characteristic of feather, some down and feathers may stick out along the seams from friction and static electricity. In such cases, do not pull the down and feathers out. Pull them back in from the opposite side.
* Packaging the item for a prolonged period of time results in wrinkles
* Stretch the wrinkles and hang the item until it returns to its original shape.

# Slide 53

## Can you draw this owl?

How to draw an Owl. A fun creative guide for beginners.

Figure 1: Draw two circles

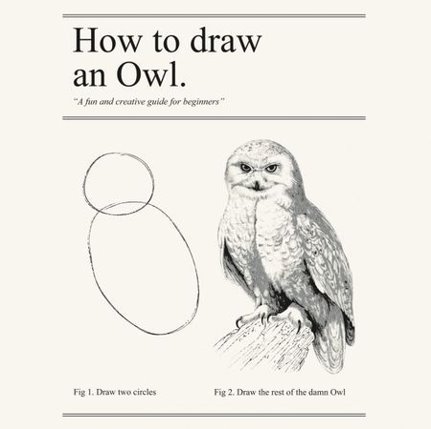


Figure 2: Draw the rest of the damn Owl



# Slide 54

## Practical strategies self-assessment







# Slide 55

1. Choose a strategy from the list.

* Jessie should go out more often, but not when she's sick. Staff should always be with Jessie when in the community. Be aware of small dogs. She'll need support when she is out to feel less anxious.
* Structure mealtimes for Robbie.
* Use a communication system to help Lenny tell you he wants to go home, stay out or have sit down.

1. Decide if it is an ‘Owl’, ‘Just Right’, or ‘a Laundry list’.
2. Talk about what needs to be included to make this a practical strategy.

Decorative image omitted.

# Slide 56

## Writing strength-based (plus Plain English) strategies

**Morning Checklist**

1. How to help Robbie have a great mealtime Robbie does his best at mealtimes when:

* You invite him to look at the menu together
* You invite Robbie to join meal preparation – remember it is okay if he doesn't want to. Give Robbie a high-five if he does join in. And give specific praise. For example, "great job putting the carrots in the sink!"
* You join Robbie at the table and have a chat about his favourite topics – football, bridges or his pet bird.

Decorative image omitted

# Slide 57

## Be aware of what we didn't cover today

Plans need to follow a thorough assessment and meet quality standards.

Good implementation will only happen through active, inclusive training and coaching.

You can use verbal and written plain language strategies in your training. This might include:

* Step-by-step procedures
* Checklists
* Video

Use Easy Read documents to support the involvement of people with disability.

# Slide 58

## Why - Mapping to the Convention on the Rights of People with Disability

### Right to accessible information

People with disability have the right to express themselves, including the freedom to give and receive information and ideas through all forms of communication, including through accessible formats and technologies” (Article 21: Accessibility)

### Reducing and eliminating the use of restrictive practices

(Article 16: Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse)

# Slide 59

## Resources for plain language and practical writing

### Zero Tolerance

Writing in plain language about human rights and positive behaviour support helps the message to be understood.

Zero Tolerance is an initiative led by NDS in partnership with the disability sector. Built around a national evidence-based framework, Zero Tolerance is a way for organisations to understand actions they can do to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect and violence of people with disability. [Zero Tolerance - National Disability Services](https://www.nds.org.au/zero-tolerance-framework/considering-additional-risk)

**Plain Language Checklists**

[Checklist for Plain Language](https://www.plainlanguage.gov/resources/checklists/checklist/) U.S.A – Plain Language

[Publications Archive - Nala](https://www.nala.ie/publications/?category=plain-english-resources) Ireland – National Adult Literacy Agency

[Five Steps to Plain Language](https://centerforplainlanguage.org/learning-training/five-steps-plain-language/) U.S.A. – Center for Palin Language

[What is plain language?](https://plainlanguagenetwork.org/plain-language/what-is-plain-language/)  - Plain Language Association International

# Slide 60

## Resources for plain language and practical writing

A resource on accessible communication from Scope Australia: [10 Steps to Communication Access [PDF]](https://www.scopeaust.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/10-Steps-to-Communication-Access.pdf)

**Active and Passive sentences**

* Your dictionary: [Change Passive Voice to Active Voice](https://grammar.yourdictionary.com/style-and-usage/change-passive-voice-to-active-voice.html)
* Writing Advice, [How to Use Active Voice in the Sciences](https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/types-of-writing/active-voice-in-science/), University of Toronto

**Australian Government's style manual for:**

[Inclusive language Style Manual](https://www.stylemanual.gov.au/format-writing-and-structure/inclusive-language)

[Plain language and word choice Style Manual](https://www.stylemanual.gov.au/format-writing-and-structure/clear-language-and-writing-style/plain-language-and-word-choice)

[Voice and tone Style Manual](https://www.stylemanual.gov.au/format-writing-and-structure/clear-language-and-writing-style/voice-and-tone) (tips about formality and it's compatibility with plain language)

**Something for fun**

[Nine Easy Steps to Longer Sentences, Plain Language website](https://www.plainlanguage.gov/resources/humor/nine-easy-steps-to-longer-sentences/)

# Slide 61

## Resources for plain language and practical writing

### Resources from the NDIS Quality and Safeguard Commission

[Interim behaviour support plan template](https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/document/1446)

[Comprehensive behaviour support plan template](https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/document/1441)

[Regulated Restrictive Practices Guide](https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/document/2386)

[Self-assessment Resource Guide for the Positive Behaviour Support Capability Framework](https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/document/2151)

### Easy Read development

Scottish Accessible Information Service: [A Brief Guide to Easy Read: Top Tips](http://www.saifscotland.org.uk/information-and-advice/brief-guide-easy-read-documents/brief-guide-easy-read-top-tips/)

South Australia Government: [Easy Read Online Accessibility Toolkit](https://www.accessibility.sa.gov.au/introduction/easy-read)

Office for Disability Issues: [A guide to making Easy Read information](https://www.odi.govt.nz/guidance-and-resources/a-guide-to-making-easy-read-information/)

### Turning on the Readability Checker in Microsoft Word

[How to test the Readability of your Writing in Microsoft Word or Outlook, How to Geek website](https://www.howtogeek.com/247921/how-to-test-the-readability-of-your-writing-in-microsoft-word-or-outlook/#:~:text=similar%20in%20Outlook.-,Click%20the%20File%20tab%20and%20then%20click%20Options.,boxes%20and%20then%20click%20OK.)

# Slide 62

## References

Australian government (2021) [Plain language and word choice Style Manual](https://www.stylemanual.gov.au/format-writing-and-structure/clear-language-and-writing-style/plain-language-and-word-choice) Accessed at 22 February 2021

Dancer, S., Brown, A.J. & Yanase,L.R. (2017) National Institutes of Health Stroke Scale in Plain English Is Reliable for Novice Nurse Users with Minimal Training. Journal of Emergency Nursing,Volume 43, Issue 3, May 2017, Pages 221-227.

Howard, S., & Johnson, B. (2004). [Resilient Teachers: Resisting Stress and Burnout. Social Psychology of Education, 7, 399-420](https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11218-004-0975-0).

Kimble(1996-1997) Writing for Dollars, Writing to Please. Scribes Journal of Legal Writing ,6.

Oppenheimer, D.M. (2006). Consequences of erudite vernacular utilized irrespective of necessity: problems with using long words needlessly. Applied Cognitive Psychology,*20*, 139-156

Plain Language Association International (2020) What is plain language?, Plain website, accessed 8/02/2021.

# Slide 63

## References

Robinson, A & Miller, M. (1996) Making information accessible: developing plain English discharge instructions**.** Journal of Advanced Nursing. [Abstract](https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2648.1996.22113.x). doi/abs/10.1046/j.1365-2648.1996.22113.x. Accessed on 15/02/2021

Tasmanian Government Communications (2012) Plain language in communication: guide, Tasmanian Government Communications website, accessed 10/02/2021

The Onion (3 March 2010). Nation shudders at large block of uninterrupted text. Accessed at [The Onion website](https://www.theonion.com/nation-shudders-at-large-block-of-uninterrupted-text-1819571366) on 15/02/2021.

Victorian Law Reform Commission (Oct 2017) Plain English and the Law - the 1987 report. Victorian Law Reform Commission. Accessed at on 15/02/2021

Wang, J & Du, W. (2019) Factors associated with high psychological distress in primary carers of people with disability. Australian Journal of General Practice. Volume 48, (4). doi: 10.31128/AJGP-04-18-455

Image: Chrisse Maher, 1979. Plain English Campaign from: [Born to Crusade](http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/files/born_to_crusade.pdf)

Image: The Nation Shudders slide Photo by [engin akyurt](https://unsplash.com/@enginakyurt?utm_source=unsplash&utm_medium=referral&utm_content=creditCopyText) on [Unsplash](https://unsplash.com/s/photos/head-in-hands?utm_source=unsplash&utm_medium=referral&utm_content=creditCopyText)

# Slide 64

Thank you for watching this webinar. Wishing you a productive writing week.

Sarah Nicoll, National Practice Lead – Zero Tolerance

Email: sarah.nicoll@nds.org.au

NDS is pleased to be able to provide the Behaviour Support Practitioner Workshops as part of a two-year grant from the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, for free to the sector.