

Supervision and delegation framework for allied health assistants and the support workforce in disability

Overview



Context

Under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), demand for allied health services is increasing. To meet this demand, there is a need for new workforces, greater utilisation of existing workforces, and innovative service models that make the best use of available skills, particularly in rural and regional areas.

There are now significant opportunities for allied health assistants and disability support workers to work more closely with allied health professionals and allied health services. Increased and more effective use of allied health assistants and support workers will increase the capacity and sustainability of the allied health workforce in the disability sector and also increase the capacity of the sector to meet community needs into the future.

The *Supervision and delegation framework for allied health assistants and support workers in disability* (the framework) will guide allied health professionals in working with allied health assistants and support workers to provide safe and effective therapeutic services to improve the lives of people with a disability.

Purpose of the framework

The framework guides organisations and managers in providing an environment that delivers safe and effective allied health services for people with a disability. It outlines the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of organisations, line managers, allied health professionals, allied health assistants, the disability workforce, clients and decision-makers involved in allied health therapeutic support. See page 36–39 in the framework.

The framework supports allied health professionals to understand their supervision and delegation responsibilities in the disability sector.

Supporting effective delegation

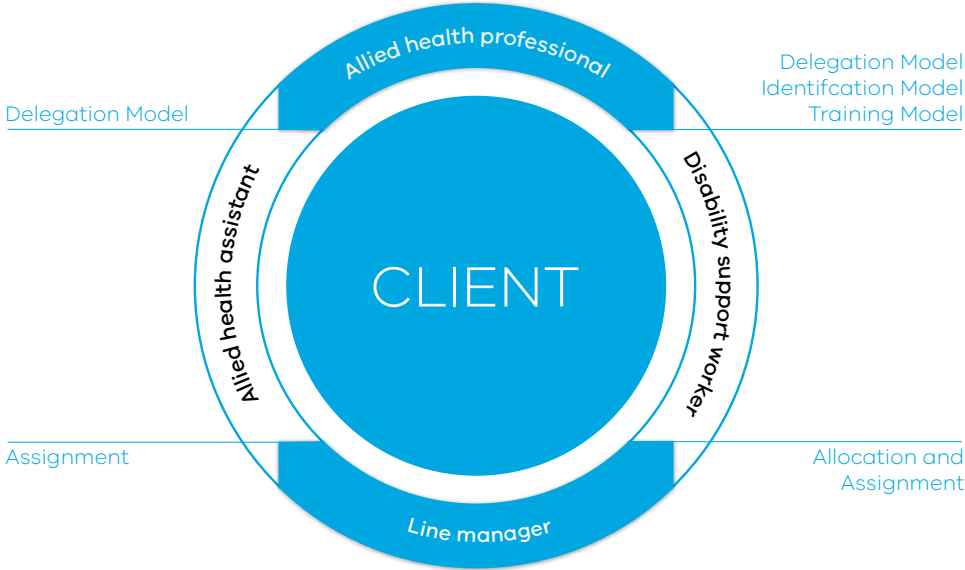
The framework supports safe and effective delegation by providing:

- models for delegating, identifying and training in allied health tasks
- guidance for when it is appropriate to delegate, assign or allocate responsibility for an allied health task
- guidance for accountabilities associated with delegating, assigning or identifying and allocating an allied health task
- the elements that allied health professionals should consider when training allied health assistants and support workers in disability services.

Figure 3.1 in the framework describes three models for delegating allied health tasks to allied health assistants or support workers. Each model details:

- allied health professional, allied health assistant, disability support worker, line manager and organisational accountability
- when and how tasks are delegated
- supervision responsibilities
- pathways for communication to ensure people with a disability are provided with safe and effective allied health services.

Figure 3.1: Delegation, identification and training models (see page 32 in the framework)



Delegation Model: an allied health professional *delegates* work to an allied health assistant or support worker who then undertakes that task. The accountability for the task remains with the allied health professional. See page 39 of the framework for further details.

Identification Model: an allied health professional *identifies* appropriate tasks for a support worker to perform. The allied health professional transfers this recommendation to a line manager, who then *allocates* the tasks to the support worker. At the point of transfer, the accountability moves from the allied health professional to the line manager. See page 46 of the framework for further details.

Training Model: an allied health professional is asked to provide up-skilling and information to an allied health assistant or support worker to support the implementation of a task. The accountability for training lies with the allied health professional; however, accountability for implementing the task lies with the line manager who assigns the task. See page 52 of the framework for further details.

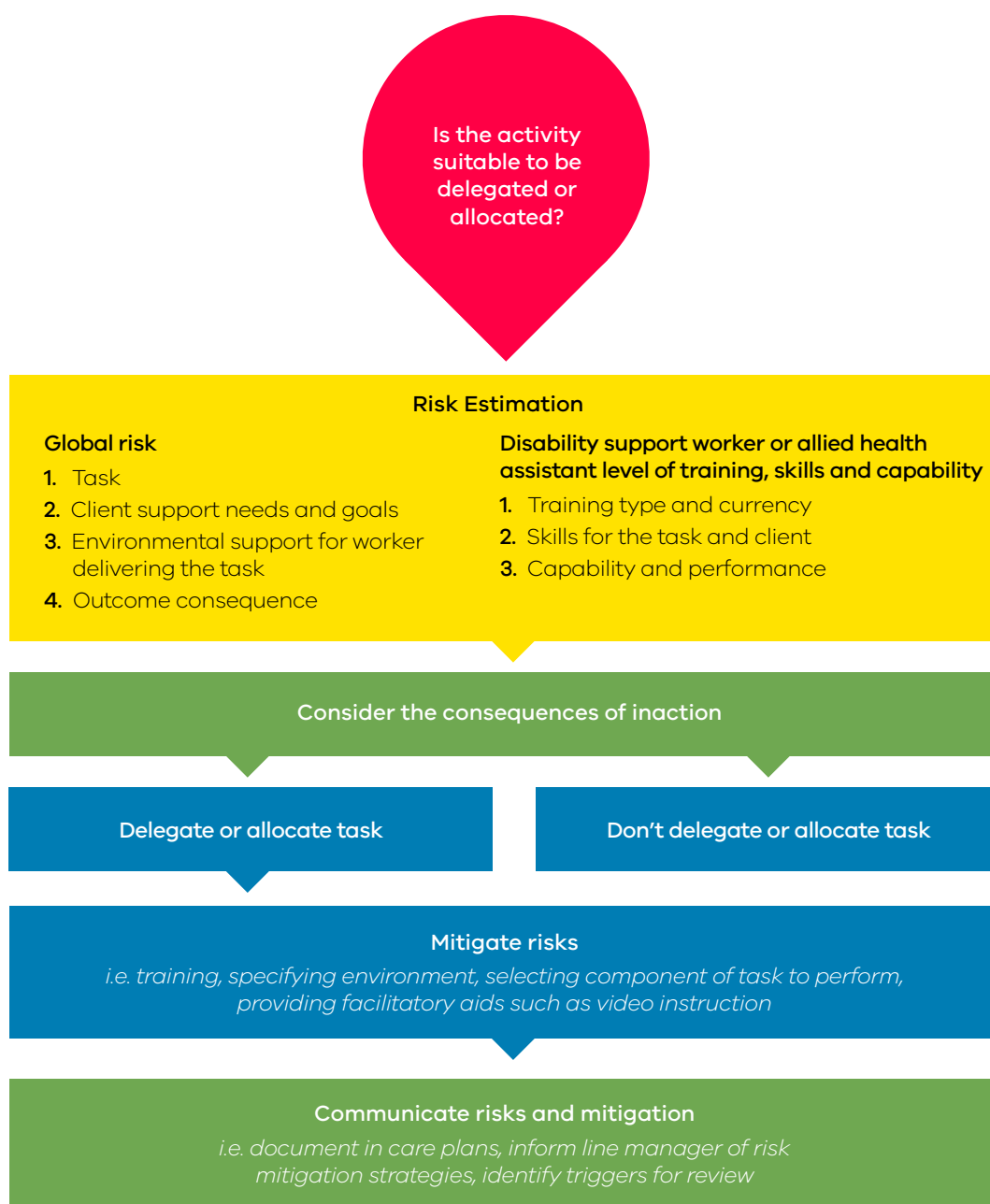
Allocation: the allied health professional *identifies* the appropriate tasks for a disability support worker to perform and transfers recommendations for the task to the line manager. The line manager *allocates* tasks to the support worker and so maintains accountability for the task.

Assignment: transference of a task, including all legal rights, responsibility and accountability for the task, to another person. Assigned tasks should be documented in the role description of that employee. *Note: A line manager can only assign non-allied health tasks to an allied health assistant.*

The key concept critical to working safely and effectively is understanding where the accountability for decision making resides and what is necessary to enable safe and effective transfer of the decision making.

As a part of this decision making, risks and risk mitigation strategies associated with the safe and effective performance of the task should be considered, developed and clearly communicated to the client, line manager, allied health assistant or support worker. Figure 3.5 from the framework (page 56) supports allied health professionals’ clinical judgement to identify tasks that could be delegated to an allied health assistant or support worker using the Delegation Model (see page 39 in the framework). This flowchart also applies to the Identification Model.

Figure 3.5: Flowchart to support allied health professionals in determining whether a task should be delegated to an allied health assistant or disability support worker



Training of allied health assistants and support workers

The framework provides allied health-specific considerations for designing, conducting and evaluating training of allied health assistants and support workers (see page 92).

Further information

To access the full version of the framework and information about other initiatives and projects supported by the Department of Health and Human Services, please refer to the department's website at: <<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/health-workforce/allied-health-workforce/victorian-assistant-workforce-model>>.