# 12. Support for Champions

#### Champions need support

So now you have done the training, you have written a script and you have even presented in front of your fellow Champions and the AFDO team…

I am sure that you will agree that having the support of your colleagues in a place where you feel comfortable has helped with your ability to make a successful presentation. It was also useful that you were able to speak about a subject that you were passionate about.

And we know that you are all passionate about the NDIS and making sure that everyone knows about it, what they need to do to get into the NDIS and why it is so important.

As AFDO Champions you are a pretty rare group. You have done the training and you now feel confident to go out into the world and tell everyone about the NDIS, and what it means for the community, for people with disabilities and for families.

But now you are going out all around Australia on your own. Do you feel confident to do your own thing?

Well, we don’t want to leave you hanging, and we will be communicating with you on a regular basis, and available if you need us.

AFDO support

AFDO has provided you with the materials you need to provide information about the NDIS, so you don’t have to start from scratch each time and you can be confident when you go out to speak.

AFDO will continue to provide you with support.

AFDO will provide telephone supports to NDIS Champions so that you can

* Talk about what worked well/what didn’t work well
* Ask questions
* Request support

AFDO will have a special email group of just NDIS Champions so that you can be provided with the latest updates.

This will be an opportunity for you to come together as a group, to keep your connections going. And this will help to ensure that everyone is being well supported by listening to each other.

AFDO can ensure that resources are up to date, and develop answers to frequently asked questions which arise from time to time.

AFDO will also make sure that someone will be on hand to either point you in the right direction to help you find answer yourself, or help you with the hard questions that come up from time to time.

#### Peer support

But then again, perhaps you would prefer to get your information from someone who is going through the same thing, to have support from people who feel the same way you do.

Perhaps you should get together so you can have someone other than AFDO to speak to about being an NDIS Champion. People just like you, who you can talk to, and bounce ideas off, and who will help you when you need it.

You can develop your own peer support group.

Because it is important to understand what peer support is, it is always a good idea to start with a definition.

Wikipedia says that “*Peer support occurs when people provide knowledge, experience, emotional, social or practical help to each other. It commonly refers to an initiative consisting of trained supporters (although it can be provided by peers without training), and can take a number of forms such as peer mentoring, listening, or counseling*.”

In this case, counselling would not be included, but this is a pretty good definition. But there are other, perhaps simpler ways to define it. In 2012, peer support was described by the Disability Services Division of the then Department of Human Services as “*when we informally share what we have learned from our experiences with someone on a similar journey. Some people describe it as talking with someone who has “walked the walk”.*

So what does all that mean for us? Well, it is up to you how it works, but we think that it would be a good idea for you to start a network so that you can share ideas and tips to being a successful public speaker and therefore a successful Champion.

Champions supporting Champions

Let’s think through what supporting each other means. What support you want, who do you want to provide the support and how would you like the support delivered? As you are the ones what we want to do is help you to support each other, because you will all be going through the same things.

In this session we are going to talk about the type of supports that people can use to bounce ideas off, to practice your speeches, to help you find speaking engagements, how to keep confident.

Activity

In small groups, answer the following questions:

* What type of support would you like to have?
* Who would you like to provide support?
* Would it be different for different types of support?
* How would you like the support provided?

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#### How would it run?

That is entirely up to you. How would you like it to run?

Activity

Think of what you would like the peer support group to look like.

Sometimes you might like to meet face to face.

However, most of you are living in different states, or even if you live in the same state, you live far away from each other.

How could you stay connected and support each other?

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Voice conversations

Pros:

* Many people like to speak to people directly
* It provides an emotional connection for some people
* Can save time

Cons:

* Not everyone can speak using a telephone
* It is limited to one on one conversations

Are there other pros and cons?

Text Messaging

Pros:

* Most people use text messaging
* It is instantaneous
* You can have the conversation anywhere and not be overheard

Cons:

* It means you can only say things in short bursts
* It is limited to one on one conversations

Are there other pros and cons?

Email

Pros:

* You can write what you are feeling without restrictions on the number of words you can use
* Most phones have email access
* You can store your emails about the champions in a file or folder
* The information can be shared with everyone

Cons:

* It doesn’t provide an emotional connection
* You have to wait for a response

Are there other pros and cons?

Skype/video chat

Pros:

* You can see each other
* You can have a conversation in real time
* You can use it on your smart phone

Cons:

* Requires Internet and can use lots of data
* Not everyone has reliable Internet access
* Some people are very shy

social media

This is a good way of talking to people in getting information out there

Pros:

* It is versatile, can use words, pictures and video
* You can respond immediately or wait until you have time
* You can use your phone or a computer

Cons:

* Not everyone has access to social media
* It might be hard to learn for some people
* You need the Internet and it can you use lots of data

Are there other advantages or disadvantages?

Face to face meetings

Meeting in person can be difficult to manage, unless we live close to each other, but they do provide an opportunity to

Pros:

* You can see body language
* You can engage with the person
* You can have a conversation about what people mean
* You can respond immediately
* You can enjoy good coffee or a meal

Cons:

* Everyone lives far apart
* It is time consuming
* It can be costly to travel even you live fairly close by

Are there other advantages or disadvantages?

Activity

Not everyone wants to be connected to others.

* Would it be ok if someone didn’t want to be involved?
* How would it affect everyone else if someone didn’t want to be involved?

Expected Responses

* It works better when everyone is involved
* People shouldn’t be forced to do something
* Everyone is different

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#### Who do I call, AFDO or peer support?

Well let’s start by thinking more about the type of supports you think you will need, and when you will need them. Think about all the things you think you might like have to support you to be.

Activity

You have been invited to provide information to a group of young people with disability who are keen to learn more about the NDIS. Most of them have heard about it but don’t have a very good understanding of what that means for them.

You are feeling a bit nervous.

* When would you feel confident to contact the AFDO team?
* When would you contact a fellow Champion?
* How did you make your selection?
* What sort of support do you want?

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#### Conclusion

So now we have an understanding of the types of supports that you could use to ensure that you are a successful Champion, let’s recap.

Everyone can use some supports, but it is up to you to use what works best for you.

AFDO will provide some supports to find events, to have up to date information and answer questions.

Peer support for Champions is available if that is what you want, and AFDO will help to support that, but the Champions have to make a commitment to work out what they will use it for and the form it will take.