

Purpose and Scope

Cahoots is committed to ensuring behaviours of concern are managed in a positive and supportive way that improves the quality of life of the participant while protecting the safety and rights of the participant, staff, volunteers and others.

Cahoots staff will respond promptly to behaviours of concern, working with the participant and their support network to develop individualised strategies that are responsive to the participant's needs, reduce the occurrence and impact of behaviours of concern, and minimise the use of restrictive practices.

Cahoots is committed to the NDIS requirements that govern the development and delivery of behaviour support. As such, restrictive practices should only be used where they are proportionate and justified in order to protect the rights or the safety of the participant or others.

This policy applies to participants, staff and volunteers.

The Operations Manager is responsible for implementation of this policy.

Definitions

Behaviours of Concern means behaviours of such intensity, frequency or duration that the physical safety of the person or others is placed in serious jeopardy, or behaviour which is likely to seriously limit or deny the person access to the community or community facilities.

NDIS Behaviour Support Practitioner is a person whom the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commissioner (NDIS Commissioner) considers suitable to undertake behaviour support assessments and to develop Interim and Comprehensive Behaviour Support Plans that may include the use of restrictive practices.

Behavior Support Plan (BSP) is a document prepared by a Behaviour Support Practitioner in consultation with the person identified as having complex behaviours of concern, their family, carers, and other stakeholders, that addresses the behavioural support needs of the person. The behaviour support plan contains evidence-informed strategies and seeks to improve the person's quality of life.

Interim Behaviour Support Plan (Interim BSP) is a brief Behaviour Support Plan developed by the participant's Behaviour Support Practitioner that provides protocols for the safe use of the regulated restrictive practice, as well as general preventative and response strategies. The focus is keeping people safe while the Behaviour Support Practitioner undertakes a functional behaviour assessment and develops a Comprehensive Behaviour Support Plan.

Comprehensive Behaviour Support Plan (Comprehensive BSP) is a Comprehensive Behaviour Support Plan that expands on the Interim BSP. It includes details of functional behavioural assessments and other observations that inform behaviour support strategies and the development of skills teaching programs. It also includes replacement behaviours for the behaviour of concern and a fade out plan for restrictive practices.

Functional Behavioural Assessment is the process for determining and understanding the function or purpose behind a person's behaviour, and may involve the collection of data, observations, and information to develop an understanding of the relationship of events and circumstances that trigger and maintain the behaviour.

Restrictive Practice means any action or “restraint” that limits a person's right to freedom. The different types of Restrictive Practices are defined by the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Commission are; seclusion, chemical, mechanical, physical and environmental.

POLICY STATEMENT

Cahoots promotes a person-centred and evidence-based approach to behaviour support that focuses on improving the participant’s quality of life, addressing the underlying causes of behaviours of concern, and safeguarding the rights and dignity of people living with disability.

Under Cahoots duty of care, all staff must act in a reasonable manner to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants, other staff and volunteers.

Cahoots staff will work closely with participants and their support networks to identify where participants may be at risk or require behaviour support. Including:

- a new participant that already has an Interim or Comprehensive BSP; or
- a current participant that has had a change in circumstances, requiring behaviour support or where an incident report is submitted detailing unauthorised use of a restrictive practice.

PROCEDURE

This procedure aims to clarify the steps required to effectively manage behaviours of concern, maximise participant, staff and volunteer safety while minimising the impact of critical incidents and difficult situations during Cahoots services.

Participants and their support networks have the right to expect that every effort will be made to ensure the participant’s safety, enjoyment and participation during Cahoots services. In any situation, the participant’s safety and well-being are always the priority.

Where behaviours of concern are identified, modifications to the environment and program will be made where practicable to reduce or prevent the behaviour occurring. Where available, the individual’s Behaviour Support Plan will be referred to.

If appropriate, a staff member will talk to the participant about their behaviour, and problem solve any strategies to meet their needs and reduce the impact of behaviours of concern.

A participant will only be sent home from a Cahoots service if their support needs cannot be met adequately by the available staff and/or their behaviours of concern are compromising the safety and wellbeing of themselves and/or others.

Behaviour Support Plans

Cahoots works proactively with participants and their support network to understand specific individual support needs. Cahoots recognises that the use of Behaviour Support Plans is best practice when working with participants who experience behaviours of concern.

Where a participant is known to experience behaviours of concern, Cahoots require a copy of the participant’s Interim or Comprehensive Behaviour Support Plan (which will be less than 12 months old) and other documents that may inform the support required i.e. functional assessments, allied health reports, school based behavioural support plans etc.

Supporting the Assessment, Development and Review of Behaviour Support Plans

Cahoots staff work with the participant, their support network and specialist behaviour support practitioner to gather information and support the:

- Development of both Interim and Comprehensive BSP's.
- Development of the participants functional behavioural assessment.
- Review of Comprehensive BSP.
- Identification of change of circumstances, where the participant's behaviour and/or support needs have changed, a review of current behaviour support strategies is required or there is a need for more frequent review.

Cahoots staff implementing Interim and Comprehensive BSP's have the opportunity to contribute to the development and review of the BSP's by providing reports, STAR charts and other supporting information as required and requested.

Should an Interim Behaviour Support Plan be required in response to an incident relating to the use of a restrictive practice, Cahoots will collaborate with the participant's support network and relevant mainstream service providers (such as police and/or other emergency services, mental health and emergency departments, treating medical practitioners and other allied health clinicians) to contribute to the plan's development.

Behaviour Support Plan Implementation

Cahoots works collaboratively with the participant and their support network, including other providers, to implement both Interim and Comprehensive BSP's.

The participant's behaviour support practitioner is supported to share information and train Cahoots staff in the implementation of behavioural support strategies.

To ensure strategies in the participant's behaviour support plan are being implemented, staff are to receive training, on-the-job coaching, and mentoring, and are supported to;

- develop and maintain the skills required to implement positive behaviour support strategies (including accurate behaviour reporting and data collection);
- understand each participant's behaviour support needs and to effectively implement the strategies in the participant's Interim or Comprehensive BSP;
- receive training in the safe use of restrictive practices; and
- receive supervision, feedback and where required, performance managed.

Behaviour Management

When using Cahoots services, the participant will be supported by a support staff who have completed behaviour support training and is able to effectively implement the behaviour support strategies and the restrictive practice/s included in their BSP.

All participants are allocated a "leader" during a camp or day program. When allocating participants to leaders, the Facilitator must assess the participant's support needs, the level of risk involved, and the leader's skills in managing the participant's behavioural support needs.

Once allocated, a participant and with the support from the Facilitator, the leader will familiarise themselves with the participant's support needs to manage their participant's behavioural support needs during the camp/program.

In the event a participants behaviour escalates, the Facilitator will provide the leader with support and assistance to effectively manage the behaviours of concern. Cahoots support staff will stay with the individual, if possible, until they are settled, or if not possible, at a safe distance to observe the participant.

Support Strategies

If a participant displays behaviours of concern, Cahoots staff and volunteers may need to balance the care of the participant with their duty to protect other people and themselves. Any actions taken or strategies used should be in direct accordance with the person's profile information and Behaviour Support Plan, if available.

In managing behaviours of concern, the strategies implemented should be progressive from the least restrictive to the most restrictive, with the most restrictive being an absolute last resort and only used by Facilitators.

Physical Aggression

If a participant becomes physically aggressive and/or violent and they cannot be easily redirected, the leader will assess the situation and if safe to do so;

- Remove the participant from the situation to prevent injuries to themselves or others. If this is unsuccessful, move other people away to a safe distance;
- Give the participant space and time to calm down but maintain duty of care by keeping the participant in line of sight at all times;
- Maintain the participant's privacy and dignity by moving others/observers away; and
- Continually re-assess the situation and if safe to do so, try talking calmly to the participant to determine the cause of the behaviour and their needs.

In the event a participant's behaviour continues to escalate and others are at risk, police and/or ambulance should be called.

Other Behavioural Considerations

Interaction with the Public

It is not appropriate for participants to approach members of the public for attention, food or affection. If this occurs, the participant's attention must be redirected.

If a member of the public is upset or concerned, the staff member will provide them with the Cahoots 1300 number and invite them to make contact to discuss their concerns.

Bullying

Bullying in any form is unacceptable behaviour. Bullying tactics may include cruel remarks, occasional jostling or pushing around, rumour spreading, malicious notes and deliberate exclusion and isolation.

Relationships and Sexuality

Participants under eighteen years old remain the legal responsibility of their parents or guardians. As such, Cahoots staff will consult with parents/guardians regarding serious matters related to relationships and sexuality.

Adult Participants should refer to the Adult Participant Code of Conduct.

Should a participant ask a leader a question relating to relationships and sexuality, staff will answer as clearly and accurately as possible. Should staff be uncertain as to their course of action, they will seek guidance from the Facilitator.

For some participants, sexualised behaviours may be a regular occurrence, which may include masturbation. Facilitators may provide participants with their own space and time alone but must ensure it is a safe environment. It is important that this information is documented in participant profiles to ensure this can be managed appropriately. To assist with setting boundaries, leaders can talk with participants to arrange privacy and personal space.

Romantic infatuations among teenage/young adult participants can cause arguments and conflict, which may result in mediation by the Facilitator or another Cahoots leader.

Suicidal Ideation

Any contact with participants expressing potential suicidal ideation must be raised with the Facilitator immediately. In these circumstances leaders should;

- Listen to the participant and respond in a calm manner.
- Assess whether the participant has a plan and the means to harm themselves, and whether they have intent to carry out that plan.
- Provide them with options to talk to crisis services.
- If there is still concern for the participant's safety, inform them that you need to contact someone who can help such as Mental Health Emergency Response Line (MHERL). If it is not possible to get support from MHERL, call "000" for an ambulance.
- Never try to disarm a person with a weapon.

As soon as practical, the matter should be discussed with On-Call Staff.

Self-Harm

If the participant has already self-harmed and needs medical attention, the Facilitator must arrange transport to the nearest doctor/hospital or call "000" for an ambulance.

All self-harming incidents should be referred immediately to the Facilitator, who will determine next steps, including contacting the participant's support network, advising the On-Call Staff and completing an Incident Report.

Sending Participants Home

A participant will be sent home from a Cahoots service when their behaviours of concern have become unmanageable.

Prior to a decision to send a participant home early;

- the participant should be given every opportunity to settle, be calm and regulate their behaviour; and the
- parents/guardians should be contacted to seek further assistance and advice on managing the behaviours of concern.

If the participant's behaviour does not improve or the participant is continuing to be disruptive or distressed, the option to send the participant home will need to be discussed with On-Call Staff before contacting the parents/guardian to collect and take the participant home.

Parents/guardians are responsible for transporting the participant from the campsite or program venue when the participant is sent home early.

The importance of short breaks that Cahoots services provide for parent/guardians should be balanced with the safety of participants, staff and volunteers.

Cahoots staff will contact parents/guardians of the participant sent home post service.

Participants will be subject to the Cancellation Policy when sent home from a service.

Reporting Requirements

Incident Reports must be completed for all behavioural incidents that occur during a service.

Reports must be completed by the leader involved in the situation.

Reports must be completed within 12 hours of the incident occurring.

Incidents will be reviewed by the respective Service Coordinator, and where required, opportunities for improvement or corrective actions identified. This may include:

- Review of participant's support needs.

- Communication with the participant's support network, including Behaviour Support Practitioner, to review support strategies.
- Review suitability of the participant for the service as per Support Plan Policy and Procedure
- Review of staff performance and training needs.

In the event a Restrictive Practice is used, reporting to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission will occur, as detailed in the Restrictive Practices Policy.

Quality assurance

A quality management system framework ensures consistency and a high level of quality care and support for participants and their support networks. Cahoots adopted policy framework is informed by human rights principles, refers to nationally consistent standards, NDIS Practice Standards, sound compliance and monitoring systems, and information readily available to participants and their support networks to inform them of minimum quality expectations.

Communication

This policy will be communicated in an appropriate way to:

- Participants and their support networks through Cahoots e-newsletter, website, intake process, easy to read flyers and accessible on request.
- Staff and volunteers through inductions, professional development and staff meetings.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years in consultation with participants and their support networks together with staff and volunteers.

This policy is not intended to be a static document and Cahoots commits to its ongoing development as part of continuous quality improvement, and as policy and legislation changes dictate.

Reference and Related Documents

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013

NDIS (Restrictive Practices and Behaviour Support) Rules 2018

NDIS Practice Standards

Positive Behaviour Support; Government of Western Australia, Department of Communities

NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Commission; Regulated Restrictive Practices

Cahoots Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy

Cahoots Support Plan Policy and Procedure

Cahoots Formal and Informal Supports Policy

Cahoots Cancellation Policy

Cahoots Incident Management Policy and Procedure

Cahoots Protecting Participants from Harm Procedure

Cahoots Restrictive Practices Policy

Cahoots Code of Conduct - Adult Participant

Cahoots Code of Conduct - Kids and Teens

Versions

No.	Approval Date	Description of Amendment
1.0	16/06/2011	Policy Created
2.0	17/01/2013	Reviewed
3.0	29/8/2017	Reviewed
4.0	15/02/2018	Reviewed
5.0	25/07/2019	Updated
6.0	06/04/2021	Reviewed and updated
7.0	02/12/2021	Reviewed, updated and renamed
8.0	11/04/2023	Updated to include Interim BSP's

Owner	Approver	Next Review
Community Engagement Manager	CEO	1/12/23