



THE BENEFITS OF GROUP SUPPORTS



When choosing disability supports, families and professionals often weigh the pros and cons of one-on-one support versus group-based support. Group programs offer unique advantages in building independence, confidence, and overall well-being. Below is an overview of how group supports can enrich a participant's life and why they appeal to support coordinators, parents, teachers, and clients alike.

Social Inclusion and Lasting Friendships

Group activities naturally create opportunities to connect with peers and form lasting friendships. Instead of spending all their time with a support worker one-on-one, participants in a group interact with others who share similar experiences and interests. This camaraderie fosters a sense of belonging and inclusion – being part of a team or community rather than feeling isolated. Over time, group members build deeper relationships, expanding their social networks and reducing feelings of loneliness. For people with disabilities, having friends provides invaluable emotional support, boosts self-esteem, and helps combat feelings of isolation.

Being in a group also means participants share experiences and celebrate achievements together, whether it's cheering on a friend during a bowling game or simply chatting over lunch. These social interactions make activities more fun and meaningful. They also encourage respect, empathy, and social skills – as everyone learns to listen, share, and cooperate within the group. In a supportive peer environment, individuals often feel understood and valued, which further reinforces their sense of inclusion and well-being. Ultimately, the friendships formed in group programs often extend beyond the sessions themselves, becoming genuine, long-lasting bonds.

Growing Confidence and Emotional Well-Being

One of the most transformative aspects of group support is the boost it gives to confidence and emotional well-being. Group programs gently push participants to step outside their comfort zones in a supportive atmosphere.

Trying new activities or handling tasks with peers cheering them on can work wonders for self-confidence. In fact, taking part in group activities “builds confidence and empowers individuals to take control of their daily lives.” As participants realise “I can do this too!” by seeing others succeed, their own self-belief grows.

Many participants begin to discover talents and strengths they didn't know they had. They gain the courage to try things that they might shy away from in a one-on-one setting. For example, one young adult in a Johnny H program shared, “I have learnt so much since joining Johnny H. I am more confident and independent. I have learnt that I can do a lot of things on my own that I didn't think I could do.”

This kind of personal growth story is common – individuals start out timid or uncertain, and after participating in group outings and projects, they come out of their shell.

Families and support coordinators often notice remarkable changes in emotional well-being: reduced anxiety, higher self-esteem, and genuine happiness. Instead of seeing support as a therapy-like session, participants in groups are having fun – which does wonders for mood and mental health.

As one parent observed, group adventures “brought Scott right out of his shell. He has the biggest, happiest and natural smile which isn't something that I've seen in him prior to starting.”

When participants feel happy and included, it positively impacts their overall outlook on life. This emotional uplift can translate into motivation to pursue further goals, because they feel more resilient and supported.





Life Skills Development and Independence

Beyond social and emotional growth, group supports offer rich developmental benefits. Many group programs are deliberately designed to build practical life skills and enhance independence in a collaborative way. Participants might cook a meal together, plan an outing, practice using public transport as a group, or engage in a budgeting or shopping exercise during an activity. These hands-on experiences teach communication, teamwork, and problem-solving in real-life contexts.

According to NDIS guidelines, programs focusing on social and community participation often help individuals develop key life skills – which can lead to greater independence and open doors to new opportunities.

A group setting is a perfect training ground for independence because participants are encouraged to do as much as they can for themselves, with guidance rather than doing it all for them. For instance, during a group cooking class, each person might handle a different task (one chops

veggies, another stirs the pot, etc.), with the support worker overseeing. Everyone learns by *doing*, and also by observing and helping one another. This collaborative approach means individuals pick up skills from peers (perhaps one participant teaches another how to knead dough, etc.) in addition to instructor guidance.

Over time, participants become more self-reliant in daily activities. They start applying these skills at home and in the community – whether it's confidently taking the bus because they practiced route-finding with friends, or safely handling money after group shopping trips.

Johnny H's life skills day programs and work readiness groups exemplify this: they provide a safe space for trainees to practice daily living tasks and vocational skills, all while feeling “challenged, supported and safe.”

By learning together, participants realise that independence is not scary – it's empowering. They carry that independence into other aspects of life, which might help in transitioning to further education, volunteering, or even employment down the line. In essence, group supports function as stepping stones to greater autonomy for participants.



Cost-Efficiency: Stretching Your NDIS Plan Further

Group supports don't just benefit participants socially and developmentally – they also make great financial sense. With one-on-one support, a single participant bears the full cost of the support worker's time. In contrast, group sessions share the cost among several participants, making the per-person expense much lower. For example, by sharing a support worker among three participants (a 1:3 ratio), "the overall cost of support services is reduced," allowing NDIS funding to be used more efficiently.

In practice, this cost-sharing means each participant is charged only a portion of the session cost, so the same funding can cover more hours or activities in a group than it would one-on-one. One NDIS notes that "participating in group activities can be more economical than one-on-one support", allowing community programs to be both cost-effective and enjoyable.

This cost efficiency helps participants stretch their NDIS plans further. It might enable a person to attend an extra weekly social outing, or save enough funding to join a special event or trip that would otherwise be out of reach. For instance, the cost of a full-day group excursion might be comparable to just a couple of hours of 1:1 support – yielding much greater value.

From a support coordinator's perspective, recommending some group supports can be a smart strategy to ensure a participant maximises their outcomes within their budget. The participant gets to enjoy a richer schedule of activities without worrying about burning through their funding too quickly.

In short, group supports often prove to be a win-win: more bang for your buck without compromising on quality of care or on fun.





Flexible Group Sizes to Suit All Needs and Goals

At Johnny H, we offer a wide variety of social activities and programs — from quiet, close-knit sessions to full-scale events — because we know that every participant is different.

Some people thrive in a lively crowd, while others feel more at ease in a smaller setting. That's why our calendar includes everything from large social events like our themed parties (which can host up to 60 people), to small-group activities like Dungeons & Dragons, Come & Cook, or skill-building workshops with just 3 to 6 participants.

No matter the group size, we ensure the right level of support by using flexible staff-to-participant ratios, such as 1:3, 1:4 or 1:5. This means that for every 3, 4 or 5 participants, one support worker is present — so a larger event might have more staff in place, while a smaller activity might need just one.

This approach lets us tailor the experience to suit the needs, comfort levels and goals of each individual — whether they're more introverted and need a quiet, structured space, or love being part of a big, energetic group. The result? Everyone feels included, supported and able to participate at their own pace — in a way that's right for them.

The Group Support Advantage

Group supports offer a rich, well-rounded approach that can often achieve more than one-on-one support alone. Participants gain friends, confidence, and skills; they enjoy exciting experiences from everyday outings to traveling the world; and they do so while maximizing their NDIS funding. Programs like Johnny H's demonstrate how a group-based model can unlock potential and enhance quality of life — all in a fun, inclusive environment that resonates with young people.

For support coordinators, this means more options to meet a client's goals (especially goals around social participation and independence) in a cost-effective manner. For parents and teachers, it is rewarding to see teens and young adults thrive socially and emotionally, not just being cared for but truly growing. And for the participants themselves, group supports bring newfound independence, genuine friendships, and memorable adventures. It's an approach that builds not only life skills, but also a sense of community and belonging.

When choosing between group or 1:1 supports, the evidence is compelling that together can be better — learning, laughing, and living life to the fullest *with* others. By embracing group support opportunities, NDIS participants aged 16 and over can step into greater independence and happiness, one group outing at a time. The journey is enriching for everyone involved, and as the success stories show, the outcomes can be life-changing.



Positive Outcomes from Group Participation

The impact of group supports can be best illustrated through the experiences of those who have participated. Participants, support coordinators, parents, and carers have seen first-hand the positive changes in individuals who engage in our group programs.



"The many day adventures and short trips Scott has been on have brought him right out of his shell. He has the biggest, happiest and natural smile which isn't something that I've seen in Scott prior to starting at Johnny H."

– Narelle Vella, mother of Scott



"I have learnt so much since joining Johnny H. I am more confident and independent. I have learnt that I can do a lot of things on my own that I didn't think I could do."

– Dylan, Johnny H participant



"Since joining Johnny H, I've learnt how to make new friends and really enjoy spending time with everyone. One of my favourite things is making my own lunch and baking tasty treats. The support workers who run the day program are really great – they make every day fun and help me learn new skills."

– Will, Johnny H participant



"James is also very social and Johnny H enables him to have social interactions with his peers. James especially loves the outings and camps. Johnny H assists James in developing the skills to have more independence."

– Christie Weeler, sister of James



Get Involved with our Group Programs

At Johnny H, we're passionate about creating opportunities to connect, grow, and thrive through group participation.



Community Inclusion

Enjoy social activities, day trips, short trips and even global travel within a small group. Social activities are offered on weekends year-round.

Life Skills day program

Hands-on sessions designed to develop practical daily living skills, from cooking and budgeting to navigating public transport. Attend one or more days, Monday to Friday, from our dedicated learning centres.



Work Readiness (SLES) program

Tailored supports to help participants build confidence and skills for future employment. Based out of our dedicated learning centres, participants attend one or more days, Monday to Friday.



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