Handout 5: Challenges to Meeting Individual Needs

Often services are provided to people in a group context. This may be in the classroom, the workplace, the day program or on the social outing. Meeting the needs of each individual person in the group can be a challenge.

This may be because:

1. There are limited resources available e.g. there are limited staff to support a number of people, there is not enough time for each person to have an individualised service, or there may not be the funds or equipment to allow everyone to do exactly what they want in the way they choose.

2. There are often competing interests in the group e.g. people may choose different things with which they want to be involved.

3. People have different support needs which result in some people having a greater level of individual attention than others and a larger share of resources e.g. someone may require direct personal care or support with challenging behaviours.

While this is a challenge, there are some strategies which we can use to better meet the individual needs of the people we support.

For example:

- Individual Planning processes have been developed to ensure that all people get a time when they can say what they want to do.

- Goals are developed to meet their needs and interests.

- Some negotiation may need to take place in the face of limited resources, but this is done in a context of everyone working with their focus on that person.

- Often timetables of activities and events are developed through the individual planning process which provide a structured calendar for achieving goals.

Most services have key workers for each of the people they support. Key workers are ideally chosen by the person with a disability and they work together to meet that person's needs.

Services often work in partnership with one another to share resources so that they are more effectively used. This works well if mainstream services are accessible to people with a disability. Linking people into local TAFE classes, sports competitions, work programs etc, promotes increased community participation.