



Information for families on chemical restraint

March 2026

What is chemical restraint?

Chemical restraint is the use of medication or chemical substance for the primary purpose of influencing a person's behaviour.

It does not include the use of medication prescribed by a medical practitioner for the treatment of, or to enable treatment of, a diagnosed mental disorder, a physical illness or a physical condition.

Implementing Providers and/or Behaviour Support Practitioners supporting a person with disability, need to work together with the person with disability, their family members, guardian, and the prescribing medical practitioner/s to clarify the purpose of medication as well as the conditions under which it should be used.

How families may be involved

The Authorisation of Restrictive Practice in Funded Disability Services Policy (Policy) requires that when an NDIS-funded or State-funded disability service provider use a chemical restraint to support a person with disability, the restrictive practice must be authorised.

Authorisation aims to ensure the restrictive practice reduces the risk of harm to the person with disability and/or others.

If a chemical restraint is administered by a family member, authorisation is not required.

In addition to their natural role, family members play an important role in assisting Behaviour Support Practitioners, Implementing Providers and medical practitioners to gather information that can help all stakeholders better understand a person's needs and what support or treatment may be required.

Family members may be asked to talk to medical practitioners to understand the details and purpose of prescribed medication/s. Some information they might be asked about includes:

- prescribing doctor's contact details



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- medication brand and chemical names
- purpose of medication and details related to diagnosis
- medication dosage
- circumstances in which the medication is to be used and/or not used, including information about when, where, time, how
- potential side effects
- any anticipated positive and negative effects of the medication on the person
- how the medication may be reduced and eventually eliminated over time
- details of a medication review.

It may be helpful to give the prescribing medical practitioner the purpose of medication clarification form and ask them to complete it. If family members need support in asking the medical practitioner for information, the Implementing Provider/Behaviour Support Practitioner may be able to help.

If there is uncertainty about why a medication is prescribed, then it will be considered a chemical restraint and will need to be authorised.

Contact information

For more information, please contact the Department of Communities Behaviour Support Consultancy Team:

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