

PCNA Conference 2026



Creating Safe and Supportive Homes

Palliative Care in Supported Disability Accommodation

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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this land.

We acknowledge the waterways, the land, the sky and
all who inhabit this place, Country.

We acknowledge their ancestors, and Elders and
recognise those who continue to protect and promote
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

We acknowledge the past and stand together
for our future.



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Acknowledgement of Lived Experience

We know people with disabilities, their families, carers and supporters have lived experience of disability. We acknowledge that this experience is powerful. When we listen to them, we have a better understanding of what is important in their lives. They teach us how to we can make our services more disability-inclusive. Through listening, and working together, we can make a difference.



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Content

- Patient centred Palliative Care –consumer perspective
- The role of specialist intellectual disability palliative care service
- Introduction to supported disability accommodation (SDA)
- Challenges in providing palliative care in SDA
- The role of specialist palliative care services
- Building capacity in disability services
- Key learnings



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Lived Experience Perspective by a Sibling who is a Nurse Educator





The role of Specialist Intellectual Disability Palliative Care

- This role is key in bridging gaps between disability and health services.
- Building the capacity and confidence of disability workers in palliative care.
- Educating health staff about NDIS funding, SDA, the role of DSW, diagnostic overshadowing.
- Advocating for person-centred and appropriate care for the client and addressing unconscious and conscious bias.

Introduction to supported disability accommodation (SDA)



Barriers and how we can work together

- Capacity and consent
- Communication
- Disability support workers
- Constraints of funding in SDA
- Palliative care education needs of disability support workers
- What is good palliative care ?



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The role of Specialist Palliative Care

- Recognition that Specialist Disability Accommodation is the client's home. Disability support workers and residents are the family.
- The needs of disability support workers are the same as family members – they need education regarding medication, recognising symptoms and caring for the client.
- They need access to support when needed including after hours.
- The provision of emotional and spiritual support to clients with intellectual disability and bereavement support for co-residents and disability support workers needs to be seen as an integral part of clinical practice.

Why this matters

The more severe a person's disability is, the more likely they are to live in cared accommodation and the less likely they are to live in private residence.

(AIHW 2024 People with disability in Australia)



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Key Learnings

- Recognise specialist disability accommodation as a home and understand how they function. It is not a nursing home.
- Disability support workers know the client best.
- ***Look beyond words*** – to get to know the non-verbal client.
- Funding split – Palliative care operates under state health while specialist disability accommodation operates under the NDIS.
- When admitted the disability support worker is needed to be the voice of the client.
- NDIS plans do not always include nursing support and equipment needs.

Reference List

- AIHW (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare) (2024) *People with disability in Australia*, AIHW, Australian Government, accessed 2 June 2026, doi:10.25816/5ec5be4ced179
- Skoss, R., Chivers, P., Arendts, G., Bulsara, C., Vithiatharan, R., & Codde, J. (2024). *What supports are people with intellectual disability living in group homes provided to access health care? A case study*. British Journal of Learning Disabilities, 52, 549–561. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bld.12601>



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Questions ???

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