

Commitment to Continuity of Supports (Business Continuity & Emergency Management/ Disaster Procedures)

Definitions

- **Business continuity planning (BCP)** is the process a company undergoes to create a prevention and recovery system from potential threats such as natural disasters or cyber-attacks. BCP is designed to protect personnel and assets and make sure they can function quickly when disaster strikes.

EABC Position Statement: *EABC has a strong commitment to ensuring day-to-day operations are managed in an efficient and effective way to avoid disruption and ensure continuity of supports to service users and staff.*

Context

As a registered NDIS Provider, EABC is responsible for complying with the NDIS Code of Conduct throughout the delivery of any and all services. One of the core requirements is

Act with respect for individual rights to freedom of expression, self-determination and decision-making in accordance with applicable laws and conventions.

At the heart of choice and control is a person's right to be an informed consumer. People with disability have a right to be informed about all aspects of the delivery of services to them so they can exercise their right of choice and control about who supports them and how supports and services are delivered, and if they need to change (point 22 page 9, NDIS Code of Conduct Quality and Safeguard Commission, 2019).

To ensure all EABC service users are able to make informed decisions about their service provision, EABC staff must take all reasonable steps to explain business planning around continuity of supports in the event any potential disruption to service availability.

The strategies implemented demonstrate EABC's risk mitigation systems and business continuity plans.

Scope of Business Continuation Plan:

This the scope of EABC's Business Continuity Plan refers to protecting service users from major disruption in their service provision in the face of various disasters, including a

pandemic. The continuity plan is reviewed across three stages: *Prevention, Action, and Rebuild.*

Continuity Planning Phases

1. Prevention Phase

Potential Risks identified that could disrupt participants access to supports include:

- Staff planned leave
- Staff unplanned leave
- Staff ending employment with EABC
- Natural Disaster (i.e. Pandemic)

Planned Absences:

At EABC it is the allocated Practitioner's responsibility to undergo significant planning to provide participants with as few interruptions to service provision as possible, when necessary.

Actions include:

- Participants are (where possible) provided with as much notice as possible about any interruptions to service. For instance, annual leave or planned sick leave following surgery.
- In preparation for a planned absence, variation to supports are discussed with each participant / service user in response to their specific needs and preferences. This can look like providing additional 1:1 sessions prior to or on return from an absence, or the development of additional resources for the person to utilise on their own or with their support team.
- **Action Plans** are utilised with all participants and reviewed monthly to ensure that in the event a practitioner is absent (planned or unplanned), another EABC representative is able to make contact with the nominated key person, and that services and service goals are able to continue with minimal disruption.
- Action Plans are saved in the person's cliniko (Client Management System) file which can be accessed by an approved registrant via a cloud server- at any time and any location.

Unplanned Absences:

In the event of an unplanned absence a number of steps will occur:

- EABC will inform participants about the interruption to support
- EABC will inform participants of timelines of absence

- If Absence is anticipated to be for a long period due to illness/injury, EABC Practitioner will discuss with their **Team Leader or Clinical Supervisor** an alternative behaviour practitioner to provide interim support. This will be explained to participants and approval will be sought prior to contacting other practitioners.
- If the EABC Practitioner is not able to contact participants themselves, due to various reasons such as injury or illness, then an EABC **Team Leader** or **Operations team** will access the participant's personal information on Cliniko (Client Management System) and make direct contact with the participant and their support team.
- If the Practitioner is not able to return to work, the **Team Leader or Clinical Supervisor** will discuss this with the participant, helping the participant understand the information and be available for emotional support to the participant for the sudden cessation in their relationship with the previous practitioner.
- The **Team Leader or Clinical Supervisor** will take all reasonable steps to help the Participant find an alternative behaviour support service, with a thorough handover being available to that service upon consent from the participant.

Internal Client Handovers:

- If a client is being handed over from one EABC practitioner to another, the former practitioner is to complete the Client Case Handover form and upload to the participant's Cliniko (client management system) file.

Natural Disasters (Pandemics)

- EABC has a comprehensive Pandemic Policy, as well as Telehealth Policy in place should a natural disaster, including a pandemic arise.
- When applicable, EABC will provide service by an alternate means. For instance, if unable to do face to face due to a virus outbreak, EABC will offer participants virtual and telephone consultations if appropriate.

To reduce the long-term implications of service provision in the instance of injury/illness from staff, EABC has comprehensive insurance in place to protect the financial impacts associated with this risk. Therefore, in the face of various risks, EABC will have financial means to continue after any period of absence or significant disruption.

2. (Disaster) Action Phase

Disasters that could directly impact on EABC being able to provide services includes those disasters that would place restrictions on being able to travel to a participant's location where services are provided face to face or having access to mobile service.

- EABC staff utilise a set of co-working office spaces; as part of our company membership, staff are trained in the evacuation processes within each of those offices.
- Within the Pandemic Policy, includes a COVID Response Plan related to the staged restrictions imposed by local, state and or Federal Government. This Plan provides detailed procedures that must be enacted to manage staff and participant safety and compliance with government regulations.
- Any updates to the relevant policies and procedures will be communicated with EABC staff and service users as soon as possible. Communication methods include: email, dissemination of the policy and procedures, access to policy on EABC website, email signature detailing updating policies, team meeting with EABC staff or **Team Leader, General Manager or Clinical Supervisors** will make 1:1 phone calls to all practitioners to advise of procedures and changes in service provision requirements.
- **Team Leader, General Manager and Clinical Supervisors** will remain in regular contact with staff to ensure their understanding of the policy and procedures and to support their emotional and mental wellbeing during the difficult time.
- EABC has established a central risk register / data base that logs the actions associated with the disaster action phase to maintain oversight of the fidelity in the implementation of plans.
- All participants are informed about variation or the potential disruption to any services amidst a 'disaster' or a pandemic.
- EABC will continue to review action related policies on at least a weekly basis to ensure they are responsive to the consequences incurred from the incident or pandemic.
- A whatsapp group has been established within EABC to ensure all staff are communicated with efficiently in the event of an escalating risk.
- The Duress App is currently utilised by staff to monitor their safety and whereabouts, and will notify the **Director, Clinical Manager, Team Leader** and **Operations team** if an emergency situation arises

Key People Responsible for enacting any plans in response to disasters or a pandemic (in descending's order, if the previous person is not available) – and any person can enact the plan in the first instance.

1. Chelsea Troutman (Director)
2. Megan Phillips (Clinical Manager)
3. Jonathon Hunt (Team Leader)
4. Nicole Matheson (General Manager)

5. Zoe Lehner (Operations Leader)

3. Rebuild Phase

- All EABC staff will be supported to take time unplanned time away from work to look after their personal circumstances, in light of the disaster and to access therapeutic support to look after their mental and emotional wellbeing.
- Any and all complaints that are provided in relation to a service disruption will be dealt with as soon as possible and reviewed regularly with the service user and practitioner to help repair their relationships (if required) and/or to re-commence service delivery as per usual.
- All service users, key stakeholders and participants will be provided updates in relation to EABC rebuild phase via email correspondence, face to face or phone call.
- Additional specific planning around rebuilding will be designed in response to specific disasters that have occurred.