Presenter ([00:00](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/vQdrBx4Zmy_HGNaROXrosnygpanHVTQVCT7V3dxMAtPiWDchwe0FDb6S9YrebEOf2RWxmZFmuoRaVObK2WACEy4LNP8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=0)):

Welcome to the National Disability Services Podcast on safe and enjoyable mealtimes supporting NDIS participants with swallowing difficulties. This recording took place on the lands of the Wurundjeri peoples of the Kulin Nation and the Gadigal people of the Eora nation. NDS pay respects to the elders, past, present, and emerging, and any community members listening today.

Heather McMinn ([00:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/vvXv9v4Y8bDCO5fWzXDOUktWBJg5xTuqLC4TUHro85898TExWBZPy4jylpKPyI8NN4vaT7FwXu8v_SVHW73eT608bA0?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=25.35)):

Welcome to the National Disability Services Podcast. My name is Heather McMinn, and I'm a disability sector consultant with NDS, the Peak Body for Disability Service providers in Australia. The focus for this particular podcast is Safe and Enjoyable Mealtimes, and I'll be speaking with Professor Bronwyn Hemsley. She will be talking about how safe and enjoyable meals can in fact be delivered with people with disabilities, including those with dysphasia and how disability support workers can best support anyone who needs mealtime support. Bronwyn is a certified practicing speech pathologist and professor of speech pathology at the University of Technology Sydney, and she has led a team that developed online training package called Co-Creating Safe and Enjoyable Meals for People with a Swallowing disability. Good afternoon, Bronwyn. Thank you for being with us, and thank you for sharing with us on this important topic.

Prof Bronwyn Hemsley ([01:30](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/Qvu9oh2atvop9iwkJgdbHjcVdKXt8c51Au0SbcSr0PxrP1qeePb-7kyQUL8-laeXnLFouDPkxypo7veTwgPWDp-WNaA?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=90.96)):

Hello Heather, and thanks for this opportunity to talk about meal times for people with swallowing difficulty. And I'd just like to acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation and their elders past, present, and emerging as traditional custodians of knowledge of the land from where I'm joining you today, and on which UTS stands and all the First Nations people on the land of our listeners.

Heather McMinn ([01:55](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/bbBwtRmgZpY7RegAUqdXKstDFbvcy93vTZs0darQJ_RQJIUXB--0O6AgjiLa-nIvq32RzmlG9IezvlDCQCG0qvmwnUM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=115.38)):

Broman, before we start our conversation, I'd just like to let people know who they're listening to so that they can look at the podcast show notes to get details about safe and enjoyable meals training that we will be talking about. If you could share a bit about yourself. And also just to note, we will also be talking about the NDIS commission training as well, providing people with options of what are the supports out there for them in this space of providing safe and enjoyable mealtimes.

Prof Bronwyn Hemsley ([02:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/gNMNeR61UfiuY2vyZNzeS-aIXDybmUqt32E-_rlsw8SEGKfYXlY_QcR36Of7ylZpC-jmC1HfWH3AVarLqLp5-qXndCQ?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=146.4)):

Okay. Well, I'm a speech pathologist and I have a particular interest in supporting people with communication difficulty and with swallowing difficulty. So people are often surprised that a speech pathologist might be involved in swallowing and mealtime management, but, it's a really important area for speech pathology and there's lots that people can do to help people to have safe and enjoyable meals. So I'm really delighted to, have this chance to talk you about some new training that's available and I think we can all make a difference to the mealtimes and quality of life for people with disability.

Heather McMinn ([03:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/7gQ4R7tdx5UJzLqayFfQRoo4kfrrdES9LOgugItq3xPq7psHRkJXb8xiaWlVS9iz9Y5qK1jYbf4iBj7frdo5Kok7J5g?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=188.17)):

Could you begin by giving us some indications on what is dysphagia?

Prof Bronwyn Hemsley ([03:13](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/VEgIXJ11MQ2zsYBrPwUnQHm8LbWIEN39u9Oj6rvrvggzMZyX4EyfITeNFU8w2mhf5PzlolRdxp_u9MB7YDVmuo_75k0?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=193.24)):

Well, people with dysphagia, which means difficulty swallowing, could have difficulty with biting or chewing food, or they could have difficulty swallowing the food, or having it fall out of their mouth or cause them to cough or choke. So it really varies according to individuals with the swallowing difficulty. It might mean that they have, they take longer to eat or they get tired when they're eating. So the symptoms and the signs of swallowing difficulty are really diverse across the group of people with disability. And sometimes it's hard to spot. So it's important that people are a bit more aware of some of the signs and they know who to talk to, they know who to ask, about getting help for that.

Heather McMinn ([04:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/rLa8bDJhHCNVCHS-anBj7DR84vh0ZEjQGZWImq8Ow2ECy-aK6bnXe3uhpDe-k5eMYg0yxI2lH-W6qtfGp7cQs3AVwe0?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=247.54)):

And some of the people who would be those that you would ask around getting help, if perhaps if you could just identify who they might be as well that helps to create that broader picture for us.

Prof Bronwyn Hemsley ([04:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/bf5XnjcZUR7VhqUehShv1Wjmn3Sl5-yuomiLbOtM2-6GNSbmymjVHkiObEJaK8UjsyTq64hvrr-h_vhGCaZaYAPer0A?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=259.15)):

Okay. Well, if you speak first with the person with disability themselves and ask them what are you having difficulty with? I've noticed that you take longer to eat or that you starting to have trouble chewing the food, would you like to speak to a speech pathologist? So a speech pathologist will see what is the person managing well with and what are they having difficulty with, and they might also need to see a dietitian if they're having trouble with eating. That's how we get our nutrition. So it's possible that a dietician could also help in terms of getting a nice balanced diet. If you have trouble swallowing and you need your food to be modified, you might need your food to be cut up small with sauce or minced, with gravy, or you might need your food to be pureed. So all of these things can mean that you do need a number of health professionals involved including the gp.

([05:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/Yp86jybawodA3IowZqwMKN6iTSor1Ho0KBYJvmrXzpE9LhpM7zoDeTCJWts6tDh5iA8R4WmqPCY7JZ-qNfqQgUXxTLc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=321.73)):

So to monitor the person's respiratory health and to monitor their overall general health. And you also might need to think carefully about the person's oral health because having a good oral health and oral hygiene actually helps people to prevent, aspiration pneumonia or an infection in your lungs. If you breathe in the food or fluid. If there's bacteria in your mouth, you're more likely to carry that bacteria into your lungs and have an infection. So you see there's lots of different areas of your body and your health, which can be impacted by swallowing difficulty. So I guess the first port of call would be the GP and the speech pathologist and find out what's going on with the swallow.

Heather McMinn ([06:12](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/oOvo3OlTfgsPAhICoOFIwIpkWsPzrl_tl_kDbSo1xpCjH5DQa6ivoLD-zegGnJC-aX-xlIUU0dLUC3C_ZvyxzYgtvio?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=372.98)):

And your training provides some supports for workers who are engaged with someone who might have a range or one of those particular swallowing or dysphagic issues, or may in fact just need some additional support around mealtime. Can you tell us a bit about who provided input into the training?

Prof Bronwyn Hemsley ([06:33](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/dPsgJuXvp1cYU4f9UOmlIq--DaZLL9LSXVsv8CBW9AUT0hVpCOY7piBvLsXXOyr0VwL60NNcHHcUf7IGYr7d3hV5BNs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=393.68)):

So a large group of people had input across three allied health professional associations and seven disability organizations with an expert reference group that included researchers in disability services and people with intellectual or physical disability and swallowing difficulty along with self-advocacy organizations and assistive technologists. And so the group developing the training brought together many different perspectives to the content, and we also interviewed people with swallowing difficulty and support workers about common problems that they encountered in relation to mealtime to help us develop immersive authentic scenarios. And the team were assisted by a learning design team who worked with UTS to translate the information into animations and illustrations and filmed and scripted scenarios for active learning. So people doing the training could really get inside a situation and consider all the factors impacting their decisions. So it was to be more than just the theory it was designed to be about practice.

Heather McMinn ([07:40](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/JHDXwzulXdWHbBK_RL6CYPO3kUiSWxFLmBDrCyTXAZWx-FDmAGja9frdZ--d5TLHRGNv4EaTqiI9XU0kNKvR8joTzhQ?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=460.04)):

For anyone who's listening or watching this video right now, it probably sounds like this is very complex and as a worker I may not be able to do it, but one of the things I love is that when you go to the Enjoy Safe Meals website, there's lots of fantastic information and resources that are available to disability workers. It also is really clear about the people who actually had input into this program. And when I was viewing the mealtime different meal options that were there and the explanations of how to actually create them so that they're appropriate to the person swallowing requirements, it just all looks so enticing and engaging and really builds confidence. Was my sense when I actually was looking at all your information. Can you tell us a little bit about how your training compliments the training that's through the NDIS commission online?

Prof Bronwyn Hemsley ([08:44](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/7Ud1jrtSuOBj8EuRQTZfD-j0GiCHb4o7-lRh_xc5WHbpS2CVaekDR3PnfE5dWyI-uvmD5Wd35kdmLSDQ87Vlvr5OAsU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=524.63)):

Well it's good that you bring up the website, enjoy Safe Meals because it's designed to sort of provide the materials for people to use for free and it pictures and videos and all sorts of materials. Now, the NDIS, website has a training called Supporting Safe and Enjoyable Meals, and it's a short online course which takes, one to two hours and it's self-directed. So I would say everybody should do the NDIS core training, so that they get a good amount of basic information. And that training is full of great scenarios and tips on how to assist a person who has swallowing difficulty. So it should help to increase awareness and knowledge and confidence in people who might be unsure about what to do when assisting a person with their meals. So most people working with people with disabilities should really do that course and then talk to the person with disability about what their needs are.

([09:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/KLviWtZb03TnaDXlw0PLmncdfjnyy3tQHm3Mx5hf90tQzPBzb0qAlkz3BSUlvt_mNjUafjf4mq7ez8pituqbwGu1JLU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=589.31)):

So the short version of training, is online and self-directed, but that goes really well to compliment a long one day of training. So it covers the same materials, but in more depth. And it's really best suited to people who are working with people with severe difficulty swallowing and those who are supporting other staff in their roles. So they might have a supervisory role as that day of training, which is called Co-Creating Safe and Enjoyable Meals, that is going into a bit more depth, and it's, with a trainer who's available to answer questions and stimulate discussion across the people who are there for the training. And that interactive element can be really helpful in addressing queries and considering all the different sides of the situation. So the one day training does have a cost associated with it, whoever is running it and information about the costs and the dates of the training are going to be put onto the Enjoy Safe Meals website, which is run by UTS.

Heather McMinn ([10:58](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/ldoDknTCd7wx6h1z63BHeiblOSFf9LcFQ_TFp7o2h_NLkXFfdUy-NKJcbnDOk-xVLbYmiyrmpevmb2O-A3bVNpLqzW8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=658.53)):

Thank you. That's really valuable to know, and I would absolutely agree, having worked in direct care and supporting people with mealtimes, some time ago, I remember how important it was just to have the confidence to do that properly and to have these kind of resources and options available. You know, I would absolutely encourage everyone to be doing the NDIS commission as a baseline training, but then actually taking those opportunities to have that, you know, one-to-one engagement with a trainer where you can actually tease out some of those more local issues that you're trying to resolve or if you're a supervisor. Is there any other resources on your website that you'd like to highlight at this stage?

Prof Bronwyn Hemsley ([11:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/bPZYyTdFWZMsh6KvGxfkPIbPsSP5z2cPAGjyOLdAj6u8pG3eOl3Q2y7YhI89lKBEQwyxUgzMP6NsrBPGLDt0iRmDXN4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=707.19)):

Well, the training, when people attend the full day of training, they have a learner workbook and they have additional resources. So the additional resources include fact sheets and tip sheets and all sorts of resources that are designed to help people. So they're available for people to download off the website. And there's also a Cook's companion, which is trying to increase variety. If a person is on a pureed diet or if they're on a min and moist diet, what types of recipes might be helpful to produce and to make with the person? And also information about the sort of assistive technologies that might be helpful for people. So I guess there's really four main things that people could do right away, apart from going to the Enjoy Safe Meals website and doing the NDIS training module. That's to really try to involve the person with disability in decisions about their meals and to take notice of their preferences.

([12:53](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/L_r3BISd15kBq5SPBrosRLyVgkn4uhahIKqfVG-NXPMlMwnOOw7LJcJSOxjD0dIWIvdK_QTi74e3-Ga1e1CradtQEYg?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=773.11)):

And that's really important because it also impacts the person's quality of life and their dignity. And so when you think about it, the way our meals look and what we eat is part of our choice and control over the day. So people could also be a bit more aware of the symptoms of swallowing difficulty. So when someone is coughing or choking on food, not to overlook that or just ignore it or think, oh, that happens all the time, but instead talk with the person about having a referral to see a speech pathologist and a dietician perhaps for any advice on ways to make the meal safer. Another thing people can do is really value the role of mealtime assistance and provide the person enough time and give them support for the safe mealtime. So often times people feel rushed at mealtimes and don't have enough time to slow down and really care with the meal. So watching the person observing, have they swallowed or have they got anything left over in their mouth? And also providing really good oral care. And people do need more recipes, like you said, Heather, there's ideas on the website for making foods look attractive and dignified and having just different ideas for menu planning.

Heather McMinn ([14:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/5STxfAveynn9Eyf-KS4YM-4UA1-5-l88CEqaCkGSJLJaWQltoYlJ8B-70lWP7skfhnEFR2_e-6-OoHbSzf1zXKh_RxA?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=855.47)):

I absolutely agree. As I said before, I think that the recipes and the photos and instructions are absolutely fantastic and great examples of types of meals and preparation that could be carried out. And the other thing I think that is so important is that mealtime is very much part of our social interaction. And if we're really focused on, you know, a person living with a disability, being able to live their best life, then being able to engage in that social interaction, experience of sharing a meal and feeling that their meal is either similar to what is being offered to others or not necessarily going to feel embarrassed, you know, that this is real food, real meals, really nutritious. You can be part of the group like anyone else.

Prof Bronwyn Hemsley ([15:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/_YKZqA0Ag8h2JFWE7VQQwuGApNcPPznCx6IAi_arN2WQLylGlupXuyyWjGVKdwD2TBPkXiqZLavSG_G4YxcTmUYze9U?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=909.83)):

Thanks for raising that, Heather, because the social aspect of the meal is as important as the food. So having an enjoyable meal time might mean having someone with you that's just spending that bit of time with you and having a conversation.

Heather McMinn ([15:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/bcbknETFg2JWaK0lkJYueHef5fxnFlFSMgw3gMiCqcnItwvb27dkD7b63B3MON8YFIDZAPoo2bBb41XAan1kRCwLZCs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=925.88)):

Yes, it's all part of what keeps us going on a day-to-day basis. And often people who are living with swallowing difficulties or dysphagia will in fact be living in a shared accommodation with other family members, with their friends. You know, there's all those things that are part of living life to the full.

Prof Bronwyn Hemsley ([15:46](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/e0Z83GQ70_CbGwpukEx1gtWM3nQYbtdPNOQP7kV1wMy52CTahtowZsEscus706wCTTpN99g7-KIrsMreKmobVePxmEg?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=946.25)):

There's another important aspect that you talked about is mealtimes and going out to eat. And what happens when you're on a particular diet and you want to go out to a restaurant or a cafe? What can you do? So there's ways people can think about how they could prepare for what the person can manage to eat at the restaurant, or talking with the chef before they go or finding out what are some ways they can modify the meal so that the person can also be included. Another really important aspect is parties and celebrations. So it's important to think about that because oftentimes that's a time of more risk where there's a buffet of meals, but not something that suits a person with swallowing difficulty. So it's really important to think that including people with swallowing difficulty in the menu and thinking of ways to have softer food and food that might be missed or cured so that people with swallowing difficulty can be included in the event in the celebration.

Heather McMinn ([16:51](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/KVH2kJEjz-SWmofhan55UU3mcQjxZI8y4KINm-sgvIlzPiIYV7OKQpyfyLazLHhFTC1-fNKWUTxA7v67ZgeERQL3Fbw?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1011.56)):

That's a lovely point to conclude this podcast on. And I'd like to thank professor Bronwyn Hemsley for being with us today and sharing the insights, of her team and directing us to the wonderful resources. And we will make sure that the links to the NDIS Commission online training and the information for co-creating Safe and Enjoyable Meals website is also here so that anyone can access these great resources. Have a look at the training package that's available, that's complimentary to that module that's offered by the NDIS Commission, and that we can all work together to make mealtimes safer and more enjoyable for all people who are living with disability, and particularly those who have swallowing or dysphagia needs, so that it's a safe and enjoyable time for them and workers can feel confident to be supporting them during that. So thank you again, Bronwyn, it's a delight to meet with you today.

Presenter ([17:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/qYK1XgtLhUTwz2PhgHAEpfAY3xpjphiSmNsZ4oAoNcz1o58BfeYpWhQxrEceIP5BO-sfMOXtLVPCfUa9V8H__dH8HYE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1074.35)):

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