

Supports Help, But Alone They Aren't Enough

Spoon theory, the metaphor that helps describe the limited energy (spoons) many disabled, Autistic and Neurodivergent folks have to get through the day, fork theory (the pain of overstimulation), and knife theory (the deeper cuts of trauma and systemic harm) are tools that can be harnessed. These tools give us a language. They help others visualise what they cannot see. But tools, metaphors, and even coping strategies like body doubling, working alongside another person to stay on task, are not enough when the systems themselves are not set up to support us.

**From our community voices, we've heard loud and clear:
Unless adapted specifically for Autistic and Neurodivergent
minds (and bodies), behavioural therapies, including DBT and CBT
often gaslight rather than support us. They reframe survival
strategies, born from trauma, sensory overload, or burnout, as
"maladaptive behaviours" or "non-compliance."**

**They centre control and compliance over context, connection,
and compassion. This isn't support. This is harm repackaged as
help. Just as a spoon isn't enough to dig out of a collapsed
system, therapeutic frameworks that ignore systemic abuse,
poverty, ableism, or Autistic and Neurodivergent communication
styles only deepen the wound. When our pain is labelled as
pathology, our distress becomes a personal failure rather than a
valid reaction to injustice, a natural reaction to distress.**

And it's not just therapy.

Traditional social skills training too often tells Autistic and Neurodivergent people that our way of being is wrong. Our honesty, directness, deep empathy, and need for clarity are labelled deficits. Our natural rhythms – routines, sensory needs, emotional processing styles, deep interests are turned into problems to fix, rather than differences to understand, accommodate, and embrace.

Meanwhile, the advocacy spaces that should support us have become part of the problem. Much of what is labelled "disability advocacy" is now becoming little more than a performance, one that relies on tokenism, unpaid labour, and government-approved scripts. Our presence is welcomed only when it's polished, palatable, and non-confrontational. Challenge the status quo, and we're told we're too "angry," "ungrateful," or "not representative."

There's a brutal irony in a system that praises "lived experience" but refuses to pay for it. That asks for our wisdom but won't help fund our businesses, relying on our "resilience". That tells us to advocate while deafeningly insisting we stay quiet.

We need more than forks, spoons, or body doubles.

We need justice.

We need spaces built by us, for us.

We need therapy that recognises systemic harm.

Employment pathways that allow for self-paced, self-defined success.

Advocacy that centres real decision-making power, not performative inclusion.

Let's talk about what true support looks like. What going beyond the cutlery drawer looks like.

Let's demand systems that don't just offer tools, but dismantle the need for them in the first place. Because what use are coping strategies when the systems designed to support us are increasingly structured to exclude us?



Let's be clear:

These new changes to the NDIS aren't simple funding tweaks, it's systemic exclusion. The NDIS was built on the promise of autonomy, inclusion, and equity. But that promise is being broken, especially for those who don't meet traditional models of "disability", with only 12% of the disabled population (and decreasing daily) meeting the NDIS criteria.

At GRANN:

- We reject a system that demands our suffering before it will see our needs.**
- We reject a system that asks us to advocate, then silences our truth.**
- We reject a system that rewards conformity but punishes authenticity.**

We need a system that recognises Autistic and Neurodivergent ways of being as valid, that funds support without pathologising difference, and that centres Autistic leadership at every level.

Because until then, no matter how many spoons we count, how many forks we dodge, or how many knives we survive, we are still being set up to fail.

And that is not care.

That is not belonging.

That is not justice.

It's time to rebuild something better, by us, for us, with us at the centre.

With collective rage and radical hope,