

Potential to Drive Service

Desert Therapy's "potential to Drive" service is designed to assess whether a person is ready for driving, or has sufficient skills to be able to participate in a learn to drive program or driving assessment.

What is involved?

Clinical assessment:

- Interview regarding medical history, school/study, learning styles/supports etc
- Physical function screen: movement and coordination etc
- Cognitive function screen: speed of processing, visual-motor integration etc
- Road law knowledge: give way diagrams, observation of traffic scenarios (photos) etc

Passenger activities:

- Assessment with the OT Driver Assessor and Specialised Driving Instructor in the car, client as the front passenger
- Lane position awareness, searching for items and hazards on the road, gap selection and problem solving
- main parent involved in learning to drive usually present in the car
- for people with Learner's licence: some behind-the-wheel driving

Breaking down the underlying tasks required for driving provides the OT Driver Assessor a much better look at the Participant's ability, without putting them under cognitive overload or too much anxiety.

Life skills review:

Driving involves, among other things, being able to be alone, to follow rules and instructions, to solve problems in the community, to manage time, as well as being able to manage the financial and maintenance aspects of caring for a vehicle.

All these skills have their foundation in earlier common activities that young people typically master in the years leading up to the driving age, for instance crossing the street and walking to the corner shop, cooking a meal, doing the washing, or making a shopping list and doing the shopping.

We ask the parent (sometimes the client) to review where the client is up to with these life skills. Where there are significant gaps in skill development, it may be that the client needs to build the foundation skills in planning, attention shifting and problem solving in these lower-level tasks, before progressing with driving.

Service Agreement

At the point of inquiry and booking, it is impossible for the OT Driver Assessor to know what the outcome of the assessment will be.

Estimates and codes for "specialised driving training program" will be provided in the Service Agreement, to ensure the Participant is aware of the estimated total cost of the service. If a Participant commences a specialised driving training program, they are referred to the Specialised Driving Instructor (usually the instructor who has completed the assessment) - the instructor is a supplier and will invoice the Participant (or their Plan Manager / NDIA) directly.

Possible Outcomes of Assessment

There are two possible outcomes from the Potential to Drive assessment:

Has potential to drive:

Client is demonstrating appropriate foundation skills across most areas of clinical, passenger activity and life skills assessment, and can be recommended for a specialised driving training program from their NDIS plan.

Does not have potential to drive:

Client's skills across clinical / passenger activities / life skills assessment are not sufficient; OT Driver Assessor cannot recommend NDIS funding for specialised driving training program at this time. Client may attempt to improve skills and try again in the future; it is important to be aware that some clients will never be able to drive because of their disability.

What next?

Clients who have demonstrated "Potential to Drive" may receive recommendations as follows:

- commence a series of lessons with the specialised driving instructor
- participate in several OT Driver Assessor "support sessions" throughout the course of lessons
- use an app to help to improve Visual Search skills
- have the OT Driver Assessor attend lessons midway and at the end of the program to review progress

Requirements

- Learner's permit is **not** required to be able to participate in this assessment.
- Goal of "learning to drive" in the NDIS plan (if NDIS funded)
- Copy of NDIS plan provided to Desert Therapy Occupational Therapy for ease of administration as the Participant continues through a program. (if NDIS funded)
- Referral from treating doctor
- Desert Therapy referral form completed addressing the criteria requested.
- Optometrist/ Ophthalmologist report
- Reports from other health professional assessments are helpful (eg OT, Paediatrician, Psychologist etc)
- OT Driver Assessor is required to provide a report of "Potential to Drive" assessment findings to the NDIA, Participant's treating doctor and the Medical Conditions Reporting Unit at NT MVR

If you would like to book a potential to drive assessment, please contact admin@deserttherapy.com.au or call 08 8960 5905