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Our commitment to accessibility and inclusion

Asia Pacific plan 2024-2027



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David Hill
Deloitte Asia Pacific CEO

At Deloitte Asia Pacific we are united behind our global purpose of making an impact that matters for our clients, our people and our communities. We are deeply committed to ensuring all our people can achieve their full potential through a workplace that is accessible and inclusive.

Deloitte Asia Pacific – brings together our geographies in Australia, China, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, South Asia, Southeast Asia and Taiwan. Together we are more than 5,000 Partners and over 100,000 professionals over 20 countries and territories with a breadth and depth of capabilities.

Our commitment to accessibility and inclusion – Asia Pacific plan 2024-2027 (the Plan) is not about ticking a box but rather follows the 'social model' of accessibility, which teaches us that it's not an individual's disability or neurodiversity that poses the challenge, but rather the barriers that we may impose upon them. We are passionate about this journey and will work alongside those with lived experience. We know that having an accessible and inclusive workplace contributes to greater innovation and creative thinking from our diverse and talented people.

We are committed to breaking down the barriers to accessibility created by society and to providing equal opportunities to all. We support and encourage changes and advancements in society and technology that will make it possible for everyone to achieve their full potential.

I firmly believe in a future where there is only ability and not disability, and we recognise and celebrate diversity in all its forms. I am personally committed to, and eagerly anticipate, our Plan coming to life in Asia Pacific.



lain McGuireDeloitte Asia Pacific Accessibility Pillar Lead

With a number of family members who are neurodivergent, my lived experience has led me to learn a lot about accessibility and inclusion. The Plan stands as our commitment to expanding access for all, championing inclusion, and working to dismantle the barriers that people encounter, whether online, in our workplaces, or within our communities.

We take immense pride in our commitment to the Plan and ongoing journey toward creating a workplace that is more accessible and inclusive for all. We are also immensely proud of our global commitment to accessibility and inclusion, as Deloitte has joined the International Labour Organisation (ILO)"s Global Business and Disability Network Charter, reaffirming our role as a positive global force.

I invite you to support this Plan wholeheartedly, share it widely, encourage others to educate themselves, and become allies in promoting accessibility and inclusion. It is only through open discussion that we can become catalysts for positive change, which in turn will benefit each and every one of us.







Disability

More than 700 million persons with disabilities are estimated to live in Asia and the Pacific region¹.

While many people are born with a disability, it can also be something that is acquired during life, in particular during adult years, with the likelihood of living with a disability increasing with age. Up to 80% of disabilities are acquired between the ages of 18 and 64. This can be as a result of a long-term (more than 12 months) physical or mental condition that impacts a person's ability to take part in everyday activities².

Some disabilities are hidden, while other disabilities are visible. The ways people experience and perceive the concept of disability differ.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities definition of persons with disabilities include neurodivergent people, who have conditions such as autism, dyslexia and attention-deficit / hyperactivity disorder. However, feedback from our neurodivergent people tell us that they often do not self-identify as living with disability.

As such, we distinguish how we work with people with disability and people who are neurodivergent. We support the guiding principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, defining persons with disabilities as 'those who have long term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments, which in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others'.

Some disabilities are hidden, while other disabilities are visible. The ways people experience and perceive the concept of disability differ.

The eight (broad) types of disability include³:

- 1. **Physical disability:** impacts mobility or dexterity
- 2. **Intellectual disability:** impacts ability to learn or process information
- 3. **Mental illness:** impacts thinking processes
- 4. **Sensory disability:** impacts the ability to hear or see
- 5. **Neurological disability:** impacts the brain and central nervous system
- 6. **Learning disability:** impacts acquisition, organisation, retention, and understanding of information
- 7. **Physical disfigurement:** impacts physical appearance
- 8. **Immunological disability:** impact due to the presence of organisms causing disease in the body



Neurodiversity

Neurodiversity describes the idea that people experience and interact with the world around them in many different ways. By embracing neurodiversity, we recognise that there is no one 'right' way of thinking, learning, and behaving, and differences are not viewed as deficits⁴.

It is estimated that neurodivergent people make up between 10% to 20% of the global population – that's around 1.2 billion people⁵.

The term neurodivergence is often used in the context of autism spectrum disorder, as well as other neurological or developmental conditions such as but not limited to autism, dyslexia, attention deficit / hyperactivity disorder, dysgraphia, dyspraxia, tourette syndrome, and down syndrome. However, even within a particular form of neurodivergence, such as autism, there is no single type. People who are neurodivergent like anyone else, have different strengths and weaknesses and exhibit characteristics across a spectrum.

Why is neurodiversity important for our workplace?

- It supports and encourages our team members to bring their authentic selves to work.
- Diversity of thought means we can bring enhanced problem-solving skills and creative solutions to our clients.
- It unleashes greater potential among our workforce and attracts a broader pool of talent.

For the purposes of the Plan, we will refer to 'persons with disabilities' or 'people with disability' and 'people who are neurodivergent' – this is in alignment with the International Labour Organisation's Global Business and Disability Network charter and the World Health Organisation⁶.

It is estimated that neurodivergent people make up between 10% to 20% of the global population – that's around 1.2 billion people.







Chris Bamford

My journey to success

At just four years old, I was diagnosed with dyslexia, a challenge accompanied by significant motor and coordination difficulties. Despite doctors' skepticism, my mother, a dedicated nurse, refused to accept a bleak prognosis. With her unwavering support, I embarked on twelve years of occupational therapy and additional reading and writing classes. School was undeniably tough, but accommodations, like cassette tapes and scribes, enabled me to excel in my HSC exams.

Dancing entered my life at age ten, against doctors' warnings about my motor skills. What began as a means to bolster coordination blossomed into a decade-long career that took me around the world. Upon retiring at 26, I transitioned into the corporate world, initially believing dyslexia was something I could outgrow. However, I soon recognised that my challenges persisted. Anxiety and imposter syndrome became familiar companions, driving me to excel while concealing my struggles. Despite this, the corporate journey felt more demanding than for my peers.

A turning point came with a supportive manager who recognised my potential and encouraged retesting. The results unveiled not only dyslexia but also dyspraxia, providing valuable insight into my past challenges. This revelation allowed for tailored support and coaching for success. The installation of assistive technology on my computer was a turning point. I received additional guidance and coaching to identify my needs and harness my strengths.

I came to understand that my brain was wired differently, resulting in exceptional aptitudes in certain areas and huge challenges in others, with little middle ground. These strengths and weaknesses are a natural facet of brain diversity, not a disability. With the right support, I began excelling at work as an adult, spurring me on to strive for success. I recognised my worth and embraced my unique strengths, including problem-solving, creativity, heightened empathy, expansive thinking, and adeptness at making connections.

Since then, I've consistently disclosed my dyslexia/dyspraxia, emphasising the strength of dyslexic thinking. When I joined Deloitte, I openly communicated my needs, strengths, and areas I aimed to improve. There still remains a lingering stigma surrounding neurodiversity. Some may judge me prematurely or be overly critical of my work, instead of allowing for an acceptable margin of error. My written work may not be perfect first time round and that's ok, I've embraced writing as an ongoing journey that will endure throughout my lifetime. I simply need the freedom to navigate it in my unique way, acknowledging that although my path might take a little longer and vary slightly from others', it will still lead to the same destination: success.





Dinkle Shah

The power of perseverance

At the age of six years old, I was hit by a life-altering spinal cord injury that left me paralysed from the waist down. With unwavering support from my family, we navigated the challenges of finding inclusive living and education. It was during this time that I discovered my passion for sports.

I have been playing Wheelchair Basketball for two and half years and have won three medals in the National Championships and represented India at international events. I've also ventured into Para-Badminton, winning a bronze medal in the National championship's mixed doubles category. Deloitte has assisted me by contributing resources in my passion towards sports.

I am currently a part of the Deloitte firm in Mumbai, India.

I have been working for the Consulting business which includes clients projects where I visit client sites. I work at our Mumbai office once or twice a month. It's been two-plus years with the firm, and I'm hoping to make a real impact on accessibility here. My journey has taught me the value of accessibility, and I'm determined to make a difference in our firm. I believe that promoting accessibility and fostering an inclusive work environment is crucial. I hope my story can inspire you to embrace your passions, chase your dreams, and leave an indelible mark on the world.

My journey has taught me the value of accessibility, and I'm determined to make a difference in our firm.

Accessibility and inclusion

Deloitte's approach to accessibility and inclusion will be built upon the 'social model' in that people are disabled only by the social and physical environment around them.

The medical model

The onus is on those who have a disability to use workarounds to create accessible solutions.⁷

The social model

The onus is on those who create products and services to design for accessibility.⁷

Attitudinal barriers include the language we use to describe disability, our conscious and unconscious bias, our presumptions towards people with disability and our empathy or apathy towards disability. While these barriers are harder to remove and will take time to shift, it is key to paving the way for full participation and inclusion.

We are focused on providing a workplace environment in which all our people can thrive – this includes providing tools and resources to help enable all our people to reach their full career potential. It also means educating our people and providing resources.

We are focused on providing a workplace environment in which all our people can thrive.







Matt Leong

"It's not the mountain we conquer but ourselves."

This sentiment captures the journey I've been on since becoming tetraplegic in 2014 following a car accident. By telling my story, I hope to raise awareness of the reality of living with a disability and share how I've been able to move forward since the accident.

It began with an ordinary car journey. But after a tire burst, the vehicle hit the side of the road and, despite wearing a seatbelt, my head hit the side of the car breaking my neck and severing the spinal cord at the C5/C6 level. I have the most severe form of spinal cord injury – an A on the American Spinal Cord Injury Association (ASIA) scale. What that means for me is that I lost all movement in my lower body and can only move my arms and my wrists (but not my fingers).

Staring up at the mountain

I spent three months in hospital after the accident. One of the doctors actually told my family that I should be sent to a nursing home after my discharge – it was this early period, the first two to three years, that were definitely the hardest mentally and emotionally. But I learned that it's OK not to be OK and to accept help.

The reality of being tetraplegic is that I use a wheelchair and without being able to move my fingers I can't do many simple day-to-day things like hold a pen or utensils, turn a doorknob or use a mouse. And to raise awareness of some of the physical challenges that people who are quadriplegic face, I want to mention the recurring urine infections, bedsores, dizziness, rashes, and body spams. These are part of my daily life.

Nevertheless, I consider myself fortunate because I can still move my arm and wrist so, through practice, I'm able to do simple chores and use a touch screen computer.



I can't overstate how important the help and understanding I received from my wife, my family, friends, and colleagues has been. I have a full-time caregiver at home and in the office and my wife takes care of our two kids aged nine and eleven. My Deloitte leaders, peers, colleagues and team have also been helpful, understanding, and amazing and I'm forever appreciative of everyone's support on this journey. Deloitte has made my office room larger and the pathway and door to my office are wider to allow wheelchair accessibility. I also take advantage of predictive text and a touch screen on my phone and laptop.

On the personal level, what's really helped has been reading a lot about spirituality and people's near-death experiences. It has taught me that love, joy, positiveness, and gratitude prevail in the long run. I'm also very deliberate about practicing meditation, visualisation, and affirmation to stay positive and change my perspective. It's so easy to fall into a loop of negativity so I tend to look forward and not dwell on the past. It's how I've learned to accept my current circumstances, and of course, to be bold, be strong, and to be resilient.

Not to say that the battle is over – I really have to take the time and make the effort to meditate, to relax, to change my views, to accept inconveniences, even to be patient with others. The biggest takeaway for me is that, for things to change, we ourselves must first be the change and make that choice – nobody can do it for us. With this attitude, I gradually started to see changes in my own life first, and then in my family, in my wife, and my children, and so on.

Resilience and change

The need to embrace change – even when it's sudden like what happened to me – has been a core part of my story. I've read a lot about stepping out of your comfort zone which has helped me be more open to new opportunities and to doing things differently. In the workplace, this has manifested in me taking on additional responsibilities as the Southeast Asia Financial Advisory Chief Operating Officer. And at home, while I obviously don't go out much anymore, I play boardgames to spend time with the kids. It's a time where we can sit down and chat about how they're doing.

At the deeper level, what my experience has convinced me of is that, regardless of race, skin colour, religion, country, gender, and even regardless of whether we're able bodied or disabled, we can all make a positive impact on each other's lives while we are still alive here on Earth.



Listen to Matt's story

By telling my story, I hope to raise awareness of the reality of living with a disability and share how I've been able to move forward since the accident.





What are the drivers for this Plan

In line with our shared value of fostering inclusion, Deloitte became a signatory to the Valuable 500 in 2019, signalling our global commitment and leadership focus when it comes to disability inclusion.

The Plan will focus on providing guidance for an inclusive environment in which all our people can thrive. It also seeks to enable Members of Deloitte Asia Pacific to deliver a workplace that is inclusive across all elements of our people's life cycle, from recruitment to development, engagement, and retention. The Plan will also align with our Deloitte global diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives and strategy.

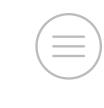
The Plan will be guided by a commitment to the International Labour Organisation (ILO)'s Global Business and Disability Network Charter where we became a proud global signatory in 2023.

The ILO is a specialised agency of the UN and devoted to promoting social justice and internationally recognised human and labour rights, pursuing its founding mission that labour peace is essential to prosperity.

It has developed the Global Business and Disability Network Charter which provides a comprehensive framework to help enterprises achieve business success while simultaneously creating equal opportunities for people with disabilities. The 10 principles within the Charter provides best practice guidance for employers around disability inclusion.

In the next three years this Plan will provide guidance to deliver against its requirements. Delivering against this Charter will reinforce our commitment as a Valuable 500 employer.





ILO Global Business and Disability Network Charter⁸

1. Respect and promotion of rights

Promote and respect the rights of persons with disabilities by raising awareness and combatting stigma and stereotypes faced by persons with disabilities.

2. Non-discrimination

Develop policies and practices that protect persons with disabilities from all types of discrimination.

3. Equality of treatment and opportunity

Promote equal treatment and equal opportunities for persons with disabilities by providing reasonable accommodation in the recruitment process, on-the-job, apprenticeships, training, job retention, career development and other relevant terms and conditions of employment.

4. Accessibility

Progressively make the company premises and communication to staff accessible for all employees with disabilities.

5. Job retention

Undertake appropriate measures to enable current employees who acquire a disability to retain or return to their employment.

6. Confidentiality

Respect confidentiality of personal information regarding disability.

7. Attention to all types of disability

Consider the needs of those persons with disabilities who face particular challenges accessing the labour market, including persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities.

8. Collaboration

Promote employment of persons with disabilities among business partners and other companies, and collaborate with national employer and business networks on disability as well as with organisations working to advance the rights of persons with disabilities.

9. Evaluation

Review regularly the company disability inclusion policies and practices for their effectiveness.

10. Knowledge sharing

Report on company efforts to promote the employment of persons with disabilities to all relevant stakeholders and share information and experiences with the members of the ILO Global Business and Disability Network. The ILO will utilise the company reports and practices in its own communication, wherever relevant.





Inclusiveness

We aim to progressively work toward accessible offices, policies, procedures, and communications for all our people.

Equity at every stage

We aim to promote equitable treatment for people with disability and people who are neurodivergent over the life cycle of their employment. And aim to educate and equip our people with the tools to learn, support and speak about accessibility and inclusion and be a strong ally. Through this we can provide the right environment for people with disability and people who are neurodivergent to flourish.

Culture and community

As we work toward a more accessible and inclusive firm, we plan to share our learnings and influence our communities for the better. We aim to collaborate with inclusive organisations and the business community to further the accessibility inclusion agenda, and create regular opportunities for the promotion, education and celebration of our people.



Focus area 1 Inclusiveness

Accessibility - we aim to progressively work toward accessible offices, policies, procedures and communications for all our people.

Actions

Conduct a Universal Design Assessment to work toward compliance in every office to ensure they are accessible to our people, regardless of age, disability, background, or any other factors.

Develop and offer a workplace accommodations policy and procedure to allow administrative, environmental or procedural alterations that enable a person with disability or person who is neurodivergent to have equal employment opportunity and to be able to work effectively. Consult with people with lived experience to gain their perspectives so they are represented.

Support a barrier-free technology experience through:

- Ensuring learning and development programs are inclusive for people with disability and people who are neurodivergent to participate.
- Increasing our standard of internal and external online usability to ensure we are compliant with the World Wide Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA, by assessing, testing and prioritising digital content guidelines and web applications, along with a targeted review of assistive technology.



Focus area 2

Equity at every stage

Talent attraction, recruitment and retention – we aim to promote equal treatment for people with disability and people who are neurodivergent over the life cycle of their employment.

Actions

Identify and remove the structures and systems that create unintended barriers within recruitment practices and processes – including practices related to job advertisements and channels to recruit, and processes related to e-recruitment, in-person interviews, and assessments.

Equip our hiring teams with the skills and knowledge to provide an accessible and inclusive experience through the recruitment and induction process.

Support career development internally through sponsorship and mentoring programs.

Create new pathways for people to gain employment through partnerships with disability and neurodiversity employment organisations.

Support work experience programs for people living with disability and people who are neurodivergent – apprenticeships and internships.

Encourage people with disability and people who are neurodivergent to join us through promoting inclusion and workplace accessibility on public facing career pages and communication channels. Collect and track data on recruitment, retention, role type and promotion of people with disability and people who are neurodivergent whilst respecting confidentially.

Develop guidance on returning to work for those who have acquired a disability, including check-ins and workplace accommodations.

Review relevant policies to ensure they support accessibility and inclusion.

Learning and Development – we aim to educate and equip our people with the tools to learn, support and speak about accessibility and inclusion and be a strong ally.

Actions

Encourage team members to complete online training that provides a foundational level of understanding of neurodiversity.

Encourage team members to complete online training that provides a foundational level of understanding of disability inclusion.

Provide leaders and managers with training to support, manage and encourage people with disability and people who are neurodivergent to flourish.

Flexible work – we aim to provide the right environment for people with disability and people who are neurodivergent to flourish.

Actions

Support people with disability and people who are neurodivergent to work flexibly, recognising that everyone has different personal requirements to be their best.





Focus area 3

Culture and community

Partnerships – we aim to seek opportunities to be a force for good.

Actions

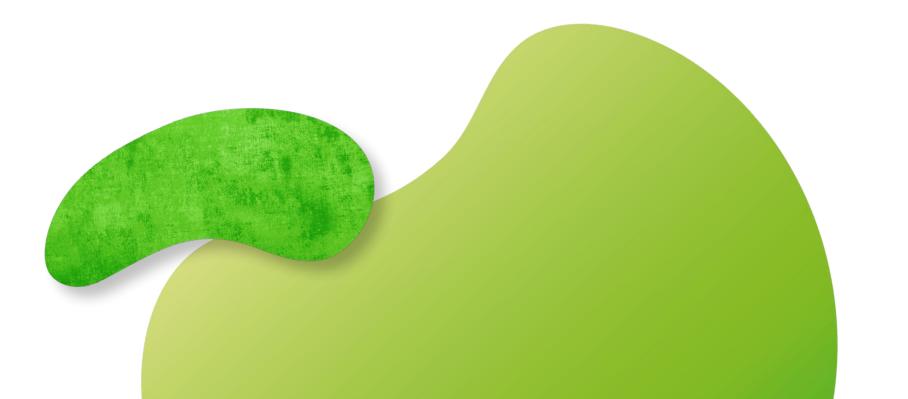
Create regular opportunities for the promotion, education and celebration of accessibility initiatives and people with disability and people who are neurodivergent.

Collaborate with our people with lived experience and create working groups.

Collaborate with inclusive organisations and the business community to further the accessibility inclusion agenda.

Elevate and support social impact activity to support external events, initiatives and organisations that improve community participation and recognition of people living with disability and people who are neurodivergent.

Engage with our clients on our commitment plan and actions.







Masako Okuhira

In April of 2023, I joined the Human Resources Division of our firm in Japan as the Director of the Diverse Abilities Planning Group. My primary role is to promote employment opportunities and active participation for team members with disabilities. As someone with cerebral palsy, I am deeply committed to leveraging my disability to raise awareness and empower individuals with disabilities. I use an electric wheelchair and rely on my PC due to difficulties with pen and paper. Communicating my accessibility needs to my colleagues and office management has been crucial, and I am grateful for the firm's willingness to accommodate those needs.

While our firm in Japan is making efforts to hire individuals with disabilities, there have been limited team members with physical disabilities like wheelchair users and hearing or visual impairments. There's room for improvement in this regard, and I hope to work on it.

In my view, an inclusive workplace hinges on three key elements: being barrier-free, offering reasonable accommodations, and fostering understanding among all team members. A barrier-free environment allows me to navigate the office freely, while reasonable accommodations, such as adjusting my workstation or flexible work hours, enhance my performance. When team members feel understood and supported, it boosts motivation and loyalty.

One of the most gratifying experiences in my career has been working on projects to train leaders with disabilities in developing countries. Many of these nations lack accessibility, but my interactions with individuals with disabilities there filled them with energy and hope. I believe that empowerment is vital, and I'm proud to have served as a role model for them.

Looking ahead, I believe it is crucial to educate all team members on disability issues and create an environment where people with disabilities can thrive in diverse roles and build meaningful careers here at Deloitte.

As someone with cerebral palsy, I am deeply committed to leveraging my disability to raise awareness and empower individuals with disabilities.





Hiroki Amano

I have been with Deloitte Japan since December 2010, where I work in the web administration team. I also take on the role of promoting diversity and inclusion.

To me, an inclusive workplace is one where everyone feels comfortable and confident just being themselves. It's all about being friendly, open, and supportive.

In terms of inclusion and accessibility, I'd like people to understand that it's essential to listen to and engage with everyone, including individuals like myself. Everyone has their unique perspective, and there's no one-size-fits-all solution.

One of the greatest benefits of working here is that we receive fair performance evaluations and rewards based on our professional contributions. Unlike some Japanese companies that offer lower salaries in exchange for welfare support, we're treated as equals.

The firm has been supportive, with leaders who are dedicated to diversity and inclusion, and they provide us with daily opportunities to showcase our abilities.

Personally, I've faced challenges related to accepting my authentic self, particularly with my schizophrenia. The firm has provided accommodations and support that have helped me gain confidence in my true self.

I've found that working from home, which is supported by our firm, has been helpful for me. It has made me more energetic and less fatigued from the daily commute.

Our workplace ensures that my accessibility needs are met through small breaks, a flexible work style, and effective communication. This has not only positively impacted my work but has also created a more supportive atmosphere for everyone.

Looking ahead, I believe our firm could further empower and provide skills development opportunities for those with diverse abilities. But I am pleased that we have over 300 colleagues with diverse abilities. Some work in the office as administrative support and some run the office café. We are also running an IT internship program for undergraduate people who are neurodivergent and have hired 20 people from the program. So, with the resources we have, it's an achievable goal to support diversity and inclusion, and it is greatly appreciated.

The firm has provided accommodations and support that have helped me gain confidence in my true self.





How we will measure our progress

- > Seek regular feedback from key stakeholders and people with lived experience.
- Meet with leaders and key stakeholders responsible for actions in the Plan to measure progress.
- Use data to establish a baseline, and better understand and measure our progress.
- Include questions in our people engagement surveys regarding the current inclusion experience, flexible work practices and workplace adjustment requirements.
- Communicate our progress with our people, clients and communities.

We aim to raise the standard and measure our progress transparently.



The journey to supporting our people

In the next three years, the Plan's Focus Areas and Actions will serve as a compass, offering direction to Members of Deloitte Asia Pacific on establishing an inclusive environment, to enable our people to thrive in their work.

We will prioritise the most critical actions as our initial focus. Furthermore, as a testament to our commitment, we will collaborate closely with our people who have lived experiences, ensuring that we meet their needs and provide authentic and genuine representation.

Our commitment to Accessibility and Inclusion – Asia Pacific plan 2024-2027 is available digitally and in accessible formats at:

https://www.deloitte.com/au/en/careers/deloittelife/apac-accessibility-inclusion.html





Endnotes

- 1 United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, 2022, "A three-decade journey towards inclusion: assessing the state of disability-inclusive development in Asia and the Pacific"

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- 5 https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/topics/talent/neurodiversity-in-the-workplace.html
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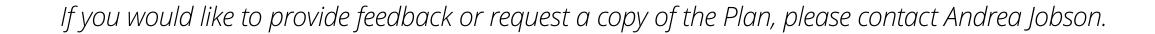
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