
Supporting Decision Making & Maximising Capacity
A person has the right to make their own decisions

Autonomy - Dignity – Privacy

Supporting Decision Making

Prepare for communication

Find out all you can about the person's communication style.
Make adjustments to your communication style to accommodate the person
Identify a suitable location that the person is comfortable in
Ensure you have information in an accessible format for the person
Use communication aids, get support from other people, use expertise

Prepare yourself

Remove any potential distractions
Be aware of your own mood and body language
Be neutral and impartial in how you communicate with the person
Support the person to make their decision without influencing their decision
Support the person without having an attachment to the outcome of the decision

Prepare with the person

Ensure it is the best time and place to speak with the person
Ensure the person is ready to talk, if not arrange another time
Let the person know what you are doing and why
Let the person know

- it is their decision, and their right to make the decision
- it is your responsibility to help them
- you understand they may be finding it difficult to make the decision
- it is your role to help and support them in whatever way they need to facilitate them to make their decision

ALERT – Supporting Decision Making

A = ASK	“What is your understanding of [.....the decision.....]”
L = LISTEN	Pay attention to words, feelings, body language
E = EXPLAIN	Explain everything, including all the choices, in a way that the person can understand. Consider asking someone else to help, such as a key worker or an advocate.
R = REALITY	Go through all of the possible choices and consequences, paraphrase, reflect back, summarise, and check understanding and retention.
T = TELL	“Tell me about your decision; Why is the choice important for you; How did you make this decision?”

Tips and Prompts to Support Decision Making

Check understanding

A person’s ‘understanding’ of the ‘nature and consequences’ of the decision is important

- Tell me your understanding about and the decision you are being asked to take?
- Would you like me to explain again?
- Tell me what your understanding aboutis now we have discussed it again
- Would you like more support / information / time?

Explore options

A person should be told the ‘available choices’ and be given an explanation ‘appropriate to his or her circumstances’

- Do you know there are various options available to you about?
- Have all of the options about and information about them been given to you?
- Do you understand the various options?
- Would you like me or someone else to explain the options to you again?
- What would make it easier for you to understand the options, I can write them down, I can use pictures, I can ask someone to help with communication
- Do you need any more information about and the options?
- You have the option to have a person assist and help to get more information for you, this is a Decision-Making Assistant

Support voluntary choice

Support the person's voluntary choice and to 'use or weigh up' the information

- What is most important to you right now?
- What do you most want to do?
- What do you wish to do to achieve this?

Explore consequences

The decision making process includes the person being given and being able to process 'information about the reasonably foreseeable consequences' of their available options and also the consequences if they do not make the decision.

- Do you have any fears / worries / concerns about?
- Can you tell me what might happen if you decide to do?

Take time

A person can make the decision, or part of the decision, at another time.

- Are you happy to make this decision now or would you like to take time
 - When you might feel more able to make the decision
 - When you have time to think more about it
 - When you have discussed with someone you trust
- Is there any part of this decision that you wish to make now?

Explore decision supporters

- Would you like someone to assist and help you to make this decision?
- You have the option to have a person assist and help you to get more information for you, this is a Decision-Making Assistant.
- You have the option to have a person to assist, help you and make the decision with you, this is a Co-Decision-Maker.

If necessary assess undue influence

- Who thought of this solution?
- What were the other possible solutions you thought about?
- How did you decide that this was the right solution for you?
- You have decided to, how does that feel for you now when I repeat it to you?