

Disability Resource Hub Disclaimer

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Decision Making profile

Decision Making Profiles and Decision Making Agreements look at what support someone needs to make decisions in their life, and ensures that they have as much power and control as possible in how these decisions are made. For most of us to make good decisions in our lives, we require support from others. This could be asking what family or friends have done in similar situations, or if they have information that may help us, it could be talking through the pros and cons, or hopes and fears. Very few people are 100% independent when making decisions, and very few people (if anyone) get all their decisions right all the time. For people to be their own unique selves, they must have the opportunity to exercise their rights and make choices about how they want to live. To begin with, we must learn how the person can best be supported to make their own choices.

Decision Making Profiles create a record of:

- **How the person likes their information – e.g. Written down, pictures, objects.**
- **How to present choice – e.g. Take plenty of time, sit down with me in a quiet space, present just a few options at a time.**
- **How to help the person to understand: e.g. Show me pictures as well as talking.**
- **The best times to make a decision: e.g. When things are quiet, when I'm calm and rested.**
- **When is not a good time to make a decision: e.g. When I'm hungry or over tired.**

This information was developed by Helen Sanderson Associates (Australia) in 2011, for Ageing Disability and Home Care, Department of Human Services NSW, as a resource to support the Lifestyle Planning Practice Guide and Tools. Most of these tools are Person Centred Thinking tools, and were either developed by The Learning Community for Person Centred Practices, or Helen Sanderson Associates. They are used here with permission. We would like to thank the residents, family members and staff for their time and support in developing examples.

These instructions are not intended as a substitute for training. If you are using these tools for the first time and have not attended a Person Centred Thinking course, please seek support from a colleague or manager who has attended training.

Decision Making Agreements

For many people supported in services, even small daily decisions may be made for them, so their experience of choosing may be very limited.

To begin to address this:

- **List the important decisions in the person's life.**
- **Discuss and then record how the person must be involved.**
- **Discuss and record who makes the final decision.**

Over time, the number and significance of decisions the person makes themselves should begin to increase. When people struggle to interpret the person's communication, as a minimum people should use learning logs to pay attention to what the person is 'saying' with their behaviour is working or not working about the situation or the decisions that are being made. A best guess of what's working or not working from different perspectives is a better way of involving the person than not involving them at all.

When people have a history of making decisions that challenge others or contradict what keeps them healthy, safe or valued, a lot of negotiation may be required if the person is to agree to others being listed as making the final decision. Remember there is no point recording things that the person does not agree with and will not follow through with. If agreement can't be reached, further learning needs to take place about what's important to the person and how best to support them with that particular issue. Most of us are particular about who we take or seek advice from, sometimes looking at who best supports the person to make decisions may be helpful.



Important decisions to be made

How the person must be involved

Who makes the final decision

tips



How the person likes their information

How to present a choice

How to help the person understand

The best times to make a decision

When is not a good time to make a decision

Important decisions to be made

The food I eat during the week.

Medication I'm on (and if we try something new).

Exercising – how often and when, for how long, what I do.

Staying at home when I'm unwell.

How Shauna must be involved

Show me photos of my meal options and support me to choose the pictures I want and place them out for the week.

Never ask me to do this if I'm eating within the next half hour – I find it hard to decide on meals when I'm hungry.

Nat (my support worker) helps me to put together what's working and not working before my medical appointments to take along with us. Nat supports me to go through the information.

Support me to keep track of my exercise during the week (write it in my diary).

Don't push me but do remind me that I will feel better afterwards.

Remind me that it's okay to have a day off. Go through my day with me so I know what I'll miss.

Let me know that you'll apologise for me for any commitments I'm missing.

If I have to stay home – help me pick out some DVDs to watch, or offer to read a magazine with me.

Who makes the final decision

My dietician outlines the options. I choose from that based on photos of the actual meals.

My Doctor with input from myself and Nat.

Me.

Me, unless I've been unwell for more than 2 days and I still want to go out, then staff make the decision.

How Shauna likes her information

Photos work best with neat writing in plain english to support pictures.

If photos are not the best thing to use or are not available write it down in plain printed writing for me to read.

Don't use a whiteboard to save paper, I like to keep the information so that I can re-read it again later.

How to present a choice

If it's something simple, like do I want a drink, use Makaton to give me the options. If not show me all the options and I'll point at the one I want.

If it's more than just what to drink or eat. Let me know the options. Give me time to ask questions. If I don't decide right away, this means I want some time to think so come back to me in about 30 minutes.

How to help Shauna understand

Write it down simply and check with me. If I don't understand what you are telling/asking me I will frown.

Give me one point or idea at a time and then continue on when I nod. I like to go over the information with more than one person (I'll let you know who). This is usually done at separate times unless I ask for both people to be there with me together.

The best times to make a decision

When I'm in a good mood (smiling).

Mid morning I'm at my best.

In an area/room where there are not a lot of people.

When is not a good time to make a decision

When it's close to meal times if it's about the menu.

When I am upset.

If I am sick.

If there are a lot of things going on around me.