

SUPPORTED DECISION MAKING

Fact Sheet for Decision Supporters

This fact sheet is for family, friends, carers or organisations and services who support a person living with disability in South Australia to make decisions.

What does supported decision making mean?

Supported decision making happens when individuals are provided with support to make decisions by another person. It's about respecting the dignity of risk and autonomy of a person while helping them make informed decisions that consider risks and safeguards. This means that all people with disability have the right to make decisions in order to have experiences and exercise independence which might involve taking calculated risks. You can support a person to make an empowered and informed decision by offering support, information and resources.

You can support a person to make decisions that affect their life even if they are small decisions. Decisions that may benefit from support could be decisions about health, lifestyle, accommodation, goals or services.

Background

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities talks about a person's right to exercise "freedom of expression and opinion, including the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas on an equal basis" and that "parties shall take appropriate measures to provide access by persons with disabilities to the support they may require in exercising their legal capacity." This means that we have a commitment to ensuring people living with disability have their needs met and their wishes heard.

What is involved in supporting someone to make a decision?

If you are supporting someone to make a decision you might:

- a. Help them understand that a decision needs to be made
- b. Explain what the decision is about and how it affects their life
- c. Give the person information about why a decision needs to be made
- d. Explore possible options and outcomes with the person
- e. Weigh up the positive and negative possibilities of different decisions

- f. Explore possible risks that may arise as a result of the decision and help the person to think about safeguarding supports or strategies
- g. Ensure the person is listened to when they're ready to communicate their decision

A good decision supporter:

- a. Respects the rights, dignity and autonomy of the person they're supporting
- b. Knows the person they're supporting including their goals, wishes and values
- c. Understands how the person might decide to communicate their decision and what supports they may need to communicate their decision successfully
- d. Spends time with the person they're supporting to ensure they feel they understand all the relevant facts and options
- e. Understands that they are not making the final decision, the person they're supporting is
- f. Will not use their support person role as a way to pursue their own interests or any other person's interests other than the person they're supporting