

DACSSA DISABILITY ADVOCACY

SUPPORTING DECISION-MAKING

DACSSA IS COMMITTED TO ENSURING THAT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY HAVE THEIR NEEDS MET AND THEIR WISHES HEARD. THIS FACT SHEET IS FOR FAMILY, FRIENDS, CARERS OR ORGANISATIONS AND SERVICES WHO SUPPORT A PERSON WITH DISABILITY TO MAKE DECISIONS.

WHY SUPPORT DECISION-MAKING?

All people with disability have the right to make decisions, to have choice and to exercise their independence. Support, information and resources may be required by the person so they can make informed decisions.

People deserve to make decisions that reflect their wishes. Sometimes this means taking risks and having other life experiences. It's not necessary for you to agree with every decision a person makes.

It is important that any support offered to a decision-maker is ethical and neutral. We'll explore what this means.

The aim of supported decision-making is to receive meaningful support, instead of relinquishing decision-making to someone else. Decisions may be about any aspect of life such as health, lifestyle, accommodation, goals or services.

DECISION-MAKING CAPACITY

A person has decision-making capacity if they can make the decision with appropriate support.

A person may have capacity to make some decisions and not others. It should not be assumed that a person lacks capacity.

Disagreeing with someone's decision does not mean the person lacks capacity.



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WAYS TO EFFECTIVELY SUPPORT A DECISION-MAKER

A decision-supporter's role may be to support a decision-maker to understand:

- That a decision needs to be made
- What the decision is about and how it affects their life
- Why a decision needs to be made
- Possible options and ways to make a decision
- The possible outcomes of different decisions
- Possible risks that may result from a decision and help to think about safeguarding supports or strategies.



A DECISION-SUPPORTER SHOULD:

- Respect the rights, dignity and autonomy of the decision-maker
- Know the person they are supporting including their goals, wishes and values
- Understand and implement the communication needs of the person they are supporting
- Spend time with the decision-maker to ensure they feel they understand all the relevant facts and options
- Understand that the person they are supporting is making the final decision
- Consider the interests and needs of the person they are supporting above their own needs or the needs of anyone else
- Ensure that the person is listened to when they're ready to communicate their decision.

Ensuring people have the support they need to engage in decision-making is central to Australia's obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

