



# Let's talk supported decision-making —real world scenario

## Supporting John to make his own healthcare decisions

Supported decision-making is about empowering the individual to make their own decisions, with support tailored to their needs. The role of the supporter is not to make decisions for someone with impaired capacity, but to assist them in understanding, considering, and expressing their choices.



### About John

John lives in regional Queensland and has been recently diagnosed with early-stage dementia. While he remains independent in many aspects of his life, he sometimes finds it hard to understand complex medical information. John has started to feel worried about his health and wants to make sure he can stay active in his garden, visit his friends, and maintain his independence. His daughter, Sarah, wants to support him in making healthcare decisions while ensuring he stays in control.

## Supported decision-making in action

Table 1: Supporting Bill to decide on healthcare matters

Steps	Example of support
1. <b>Get to know the person</b>	Sarah talks with John about what matters most to him. John shares that he values staying active in his garden, visiting his friends, and being independent.
2. <b>Identify the decision</b>	John needs to decide whether to go ahead with a minor surgery recommended by his doctor. Sarah ensures John understands the decision and what it involves, including the recovery journey.



Steps	What to ask, think about and suggested questions
3. <b>Prepare to make the decision</b>	John nominates a quiet time when he feels relaxed and ready to talk. Sarah asks John how he would like her to help him make the decision. John says he wants her to explain things clearly and help him ask the right questions
4. <b>Gather the right information</b>	Together, they speak with his GP and specialist to get clear information about the surgery including the risks, benefits, and recovery process. Sarah asks for written summaries in plain language so John can read them later.
5. <b>Communicate clearly</b>	Sarah repeats key points and asks open-ended questions with John. She encourages John to ask questions and express how he feels about the options available.
6. <b>Explore options together</b>	John and Sarah discuss the different options: going ahead with the surgery, trying medication, or waiting to see if symptoms improve. Sarah helps John weigh each choice against what matters most to him. John says he wants to stay active and healthy for as long as possible, so he feels the surgery might be the best choice.
7. <b>Support and act on the decision</b>	After thinking it over, John decides to proceed with the surgery. Sarah helps him book the appointment and makes sure he understands what will happen before, during and after the procedure.
8. <b>Review and uphold the decision</b>	After surgery, Sarah checks in with John to see how he's feeling and to confirm he's still happy with the decision. John says he feels good about his choice and is glad he went ahead with the surgery.

## Outcome

John's values and his concerns guided his decision. With Sarah's support, he was able to make an informed choice that matched his priorities. John feels respected and confident, and he is now able to stay active, independent, and connected to his community.



### Contact us

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### Acknowledgement of Country

The Office of the Public Guardian acknowledges and pays our respects to the Traditional Custodians over the lands, seas and waterways throughout the state of Queensland in which we work and live and pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

### Translation

If you need translation services, contact the Translating and Interpreting Service on **131 450**.