



Let's talk supported decision-making

A guide for families, friends, and carers

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.

Core principles

1. Start with the belief that everyone can make decisions

Capacity to make decisions must be assumed and every effort should be made to empower someone to make their own decisions.

2. Support don't substitute

Your role is to help the person understand, think through, and express their choice.

3. Respect what matters most to the person

Use their values, preferences, and goals to guide the process to enable them to make the decision.

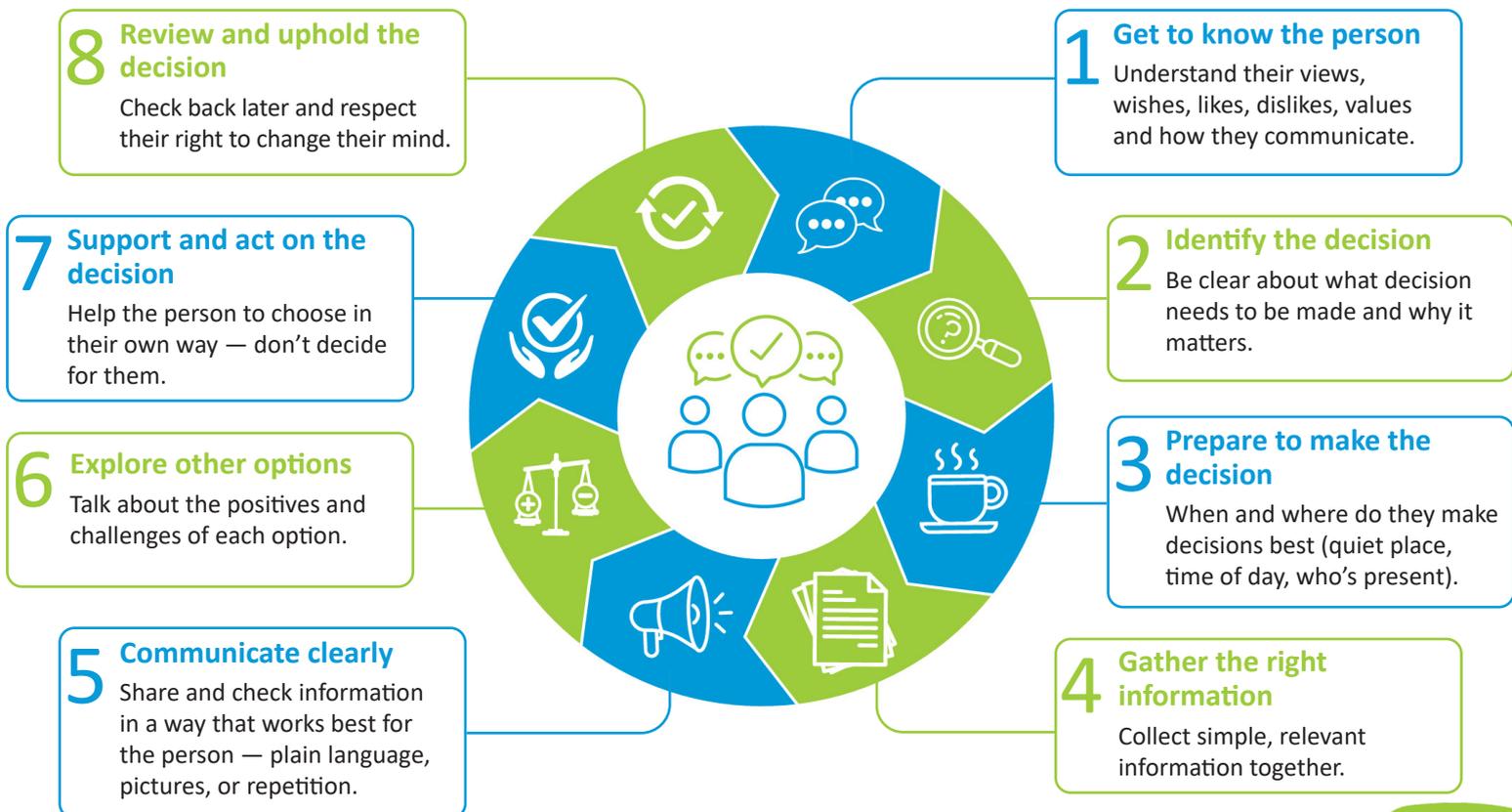
4. Balance dignity and safety

Explain risks and consequences but avoid taking control. A risky choice isn't the same as a wrong choice.

5. Be flexible

Each person and each decision are different — adapt your support to fit the situation.

An 8-step approach to supported decision-making



An 8-step approach to supported decision-making—checklist

For family, friends and carers

Use the provided checklist to support a family member or friend in making decisions about their healthcare, living arrangements, Aged Care or NDIS matters.

- Pick the Core Checklist first for overall guidance.
- Use the topic examples when the decision fits those areas.
- Write short notes to record how the person’s preferences guided the decision.
- Use them to show that the person was involved and supported.

Steps	What do I need to do	What to think about and suggested questions	Examples	Note/reflections	Tick
1. Get to know the person	Understand their views, wishes, likes/dislikes, values and how they communicate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What matters most to them? • How do they prefer to talk about things? • Who do they trust to be involved? 	Example: <i>“They prefer short chats in the morning and like using photos.”</i>		<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Identify the decision	Be clear about what decision needs to be made and why it matters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What decision needs to be made right now? • What happens if no decision is made? 	Example: <i>“Choosing where to live next year.”</i>		<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Prepare to make the decision	When and where do they make decisions best (quiet place, time of day, who’s present).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What communication tools (pictures, notes, breaks) or supports do they need? • When and where do they decide best? • Who should be there? 	Example: <i>“Would you like to talk about it now or after lunch when it’s quieter?”</i> <i>“Quiet space after lunch, use of photos.”</i>		<input type="checkbox"/>



4. Gather the right information	Collect simple, relevant information together.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the options, costs, and risks? • Who can explain things clearly? • Is information in plain language or visual form? 	Example: <i>“Option B is cheaper but closer to family.”</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Communicate clearly	Share and check information in a way that works best for the person — plain language, pictures, or repetition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do they express themselves? • Do they need more time or another way of explaining? • Can they tell you what they understood? 	Example: <i>“Use short sentences and visual aids to explain options.”</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Explore options together	Talk about the positives and challenges of each option.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do they like or dislike about each choice? • How does each choice fit with their goals, wishes and values. 	Example: <i>“Option A is near friends; Option B offers more support staff.”</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Support and act on the decision	Help the person to choose in their own way—don’t decide for them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can you help them act on their decision? • Do they agree to each next step? • Do they need help booking or setting things up? 	Example: <i>“Make calls or bookings together.”</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Review and uphold the decision	Check back later and respect their right to change their mind.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did things go? • Are adjustments needed? • Do they want to revisit the decision? 	Example: <i>“One month later happy with choice —wants to stay”</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>

