



Supported Decision Making



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Supported Decision Making



Getting to know the person

Understanding the person

Understanding the person's life now

Understanding the people in the person's life

Getting clear on the difference between what's important to the person and what's important for the person

Understanding who the person is

If people we support are to achieve the lifestyle they desire, we need to understand them.

Understanding requires insight, time and empathy.

~ *Michael Smull*

Good support is all about really understanding people. Giving people support in a way that is right for them can only be done if we work alongside them and really listen and hear what is important to them. Understanding a person's unique perspective on life can be difficult as we are all unique and our history, interests, passions, likes and dislikes will differ for each one of us. In developing good relationships with people, we share information about ourselves to deepen our understanding of each other.

Begin by exploring what we know and understand about the person, which may be included in a person centred plan. We want to develop a deep and rich understanding of who the person is. It is important that we aim to gather person centred information; information about who the person is, their gifts, passions and interests, not simply a list of the person's impairments or perceived difficulties. We are not looking for typical 'service descriptions'.

The following gives an example of the difference:

Mary is 38 with intellectual disabilities and epilepsy. Mary likes to be in charge and likes to spend time with her peers.

Mary is a determined woman with a passion for living life the way she wants to. Mary is fun to be around. Mary likes her support to follow her lead.

Good person centred questions can help us learn about people in a way that keeps them in control. The questions can help us build a rich picture of who a person is and how they choose to live their life.

We are in a better position to support people in decision making if we really understand who they are.

Exploring answers to the following questions can help deepen our understanding and build meaningful relationships with people.

- What do we like, admire and respect about the person?
- What does the person offer those around them?
- What really lights up the person, their passion and love?
- What are their interests, hobbies?
- What's really important to the person?
- What's important to know about the person's story that makes them who they are today?
- Who are the people and places that matter to the person?
- What are their highlights and achievements so far?
- What would a good future look like for the person?
- Thinking back when have been the best times in the person's life and why – what does this teach us about what's important to the person?

What is life like now?

Asking people to think about how life is now for the person is really important. We are listening to how life is now so we can learn about essential areas such as:

- What does this tell us about what's important and should stay the same in the person's life?
- What does this teach us about important relationships?
- What does this teach us about pace of life and purpose?
- How does life now match with who the person is?

For most people life is more than a series of activities or a filling up of their days. In services we focus on these things because they look like the sorts of things that we can manage and demonstrate openly to others what our support looks like - i.e. We have some capacity to support Mary as she looks for work and we can assist John with the everyday tasks of life, but working with Mary in a way that meets her deepest needs, the need for purpose and fulfilment, the need for love and belonging, to know the things that make for Mary's happiness, not just the things that bring her enjoyment is a little harder to do. Yet, these are the things that make us human and add richness and quality to our lives and become our platform to explore more in life.

Listening to Learn

An important element of these conversations is learning to listen in a way that is helpful and supportive. Often what we hear when exploring what life is like now with someone, there are areas of the person's life that are identified as being really important to them and must remain in their life in the future. We can also hear inconsistencies with what we have learnt about who the person is and how they are living their life. For example: Judy was described as the life and soul of the party – a real people person who loved socialising with others. In listening to how her life is now – there are very few opportunities for Judy to celebrate and party with others, or for being the host of these gatherings. This is inconsistent with who we know Judy to be and what is important to her. We can use this learning in how we support Judy making sure she has plenty of opportunity to host her own parties.

Understanding the important people in the persons life

We all have important relationships in our lives, with people we like, respect and love. We draw upon these people when facing important decisions. Sometimes it's as simple as getting some feedback on ideas you might have about the decision you are considering and other times it is specifically asking them for their perspective and advice.

It is important to remember that we don't always use everyone in our life to help make a decision. We often choose people depending on the decision being faced. Some people may need support to figure out who these individuals are. Different people can offer us their perspective, in the context of knowing and understanding us well.

It is vital that we know, acknowledge and draw on the important people who are in the person's life. If people need support to make decisions it is crucial to work alongside them to establish their own relationships circle. For some people a circle of support may be a couple of people, and for others it may include more – however what's important is that there is someone who has a positive relationship and understanding of the person and someone whom the person would want to be involved.

Explore what it might take to develop and establish a circle of support alongside the person. The circle will have a role to support the person's decision making.

Understanding decisions in the person's life

It is important to explore how decisions are made for ourselves and how we may draw on other people to consider our options. The following table can help you to think about this by exploring the decisions the person makes in their life today and what (if any) decisions are made by others around the person. Finally, what have you noticed about how the person is best involved in decision making.

Decisions I make	Decisions I'm supported to make	Decisions that are made by others	Ways that the person can be meaningfully involved in decision making
What to wear today	What I spend my money on	Funding	Leading conversations
What I will eat	Where and who I will live with	Big financial decisions	Sharing important information to discuss
Who I socialize with	Who will support me	Health	Communication system
What music I listen to	Where I will work		

Step 1 - Understanding who is in a person's life

There are many ways to capture who is close to the person, and this chart is one way to do that.

Together explore who are the important people in the person's life. This includes people who have a positive relationship and who understand the person well. It is important that we think about people who have knowledge of who the person is, has some meaningful involvement with the person, and whom the person would choose to be involved.

We need to consider what do these people we have identified teach us about the kind of people the person gets on with – what are the traits the person likes about others, and what's important to the person about these traits and why.

This exercise is to note the people who are closest to the person by placing their name or a photo (whatever works for the person) nearest the middle of the circle. Place those people who are connected, but not so close, further to the outside of the circle. Explore what it would take for the people further out to be part of the person's circle of support. Asking questions such as 'who can we invite into the person's life?', and 'how can we strengthen and expand these current and future potential relationships?'

Ask:

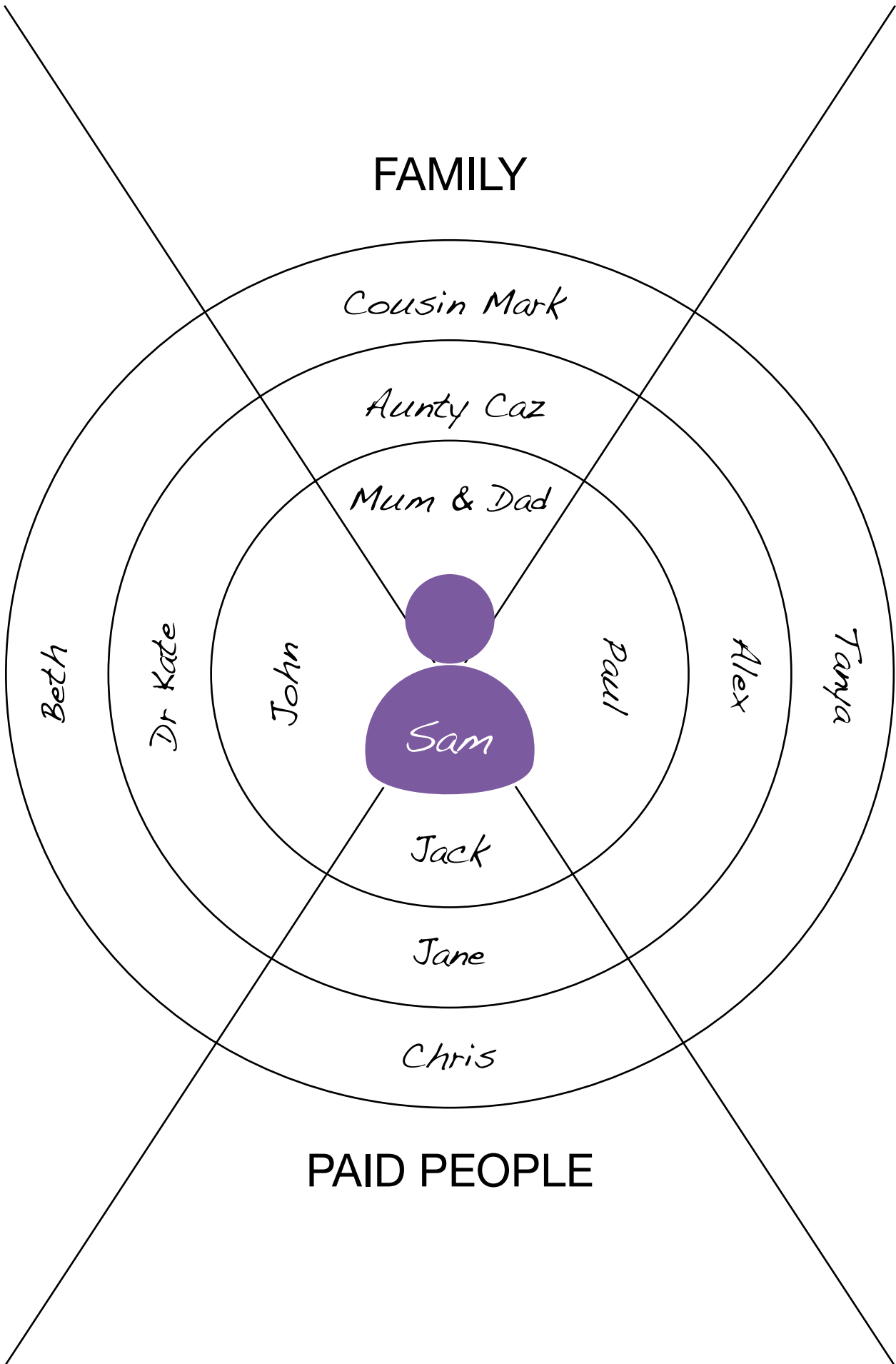
- Who are the people you are close to you, those people who you could not imagine living without? People in your family? People at work? Neighbours?
- Who are the people you do things with? Talk to? Work with? Acquaintances?
- Who do you spend the most time with? Who are the people that know you best?
- Who are the people you trust, and who you can turn to?
- Who are the people that support you to live your life?

OTHERS

FRIENDS

FAMILY

PAID PEOPLE



Step 2 - Understanding what the circle of support may offer the person

Together with the people identified as important, explore what they may offer the person in relation to decision making. For example someone may love the person and will always try to make sure the person’s voice is heard, or someone may have expertise in areas such as housing and if the person faced a decision in relation to housing, could have some expertise to offer.

A good conversation about this is all that is needed – however the following chart may help deepen your understanding in terms of what each person could offer.

Exploring the contributions of people in your life

People	Possible Contribution / Support
<i>Example</i>	
Kate – Johns mum	Love John to bits and will protect his interests. Wants John to be in control of as much of his life as possible – so will support John to be heard. Decisions such as day to day living, future planning, housing, work.
Ted – a long time supporter	Has a good understanding of what matters to John and what would make a good support for John. Has supported John to make decisions in the past. Decisions such as day to day, good support.

Getting clear on the difference between what’s *important* to the person and what’s *important for* the person.

Michael Smull (Essential Lifestyle Planning for Everyone) described a useful approach for exploring what’s important to people.

“What is important to a person is what they say through their own words and behaviours about what really matters to them.

What is important for people are the things that help people become or stay healthy and safe, whether it is important to them or not.

The balance between the two is the compromise that all of us experience in life: between wanting to eat chocolate and maintain weight and between having lazy evenings and wanting to get fitter at the gym. We all need to find a balance so that our lives are not just about what we choose, but also what we know needs to happen for us to be safe and healthy.”

<http://www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk/reading-room/how/person-centred-thinking/person-centred-thinking-tools/sorting-important-tofor.aspx>

It is important to know and understand that very often people who rely on support can have much of the focus on what’s important for their health and wellbeing – things that will keep the person safe or healthy, as opposed to a strong focus on the things that are important to the person. A balance of what’s important to you and what’s important for you is what we are aiming to understand and support people to explore.

Working out the difference is really important when assisting people with decision making.

Balance



Important to / Important for

Important to

- People to be with /relationships
 - Things to do
 - Places to go
 - Rituals or routines
 - Rhythm or pace of life
 - Things to have
- Includes what matters the most to the person –their own definition of quality of life
 - What is important to a person includes only what people “say”:
 - with their words
 - with their behaviour
- When the person’s words and behaviour are in conflict, listen to their behaviour

Important for

- What is important for people, includes only those things that need to be kept in mind regarding–
 - Issues of health or safety
 - Physical health and safety, including wellness and prevention
 - Emotional health and safety, including support needed



Supported Decision Making

Resources

Discovering who the person is

- What do we like, admire and respect about the person?
- What does the person offer those around them?
- What really lights up the person, their passion and love?
- What are their interests, hobbies?
- What's really important to the person?
- What's important to know about the person's story that makes them who they are today?
- Who are the people and places that matter to the person?
- What are the highlights and achievements so far?
- What would a good future look like for the person?
- Thinking back when have been the best times in the person's life and why – what does this teach us about what's important to the person?



Supported Decision Making



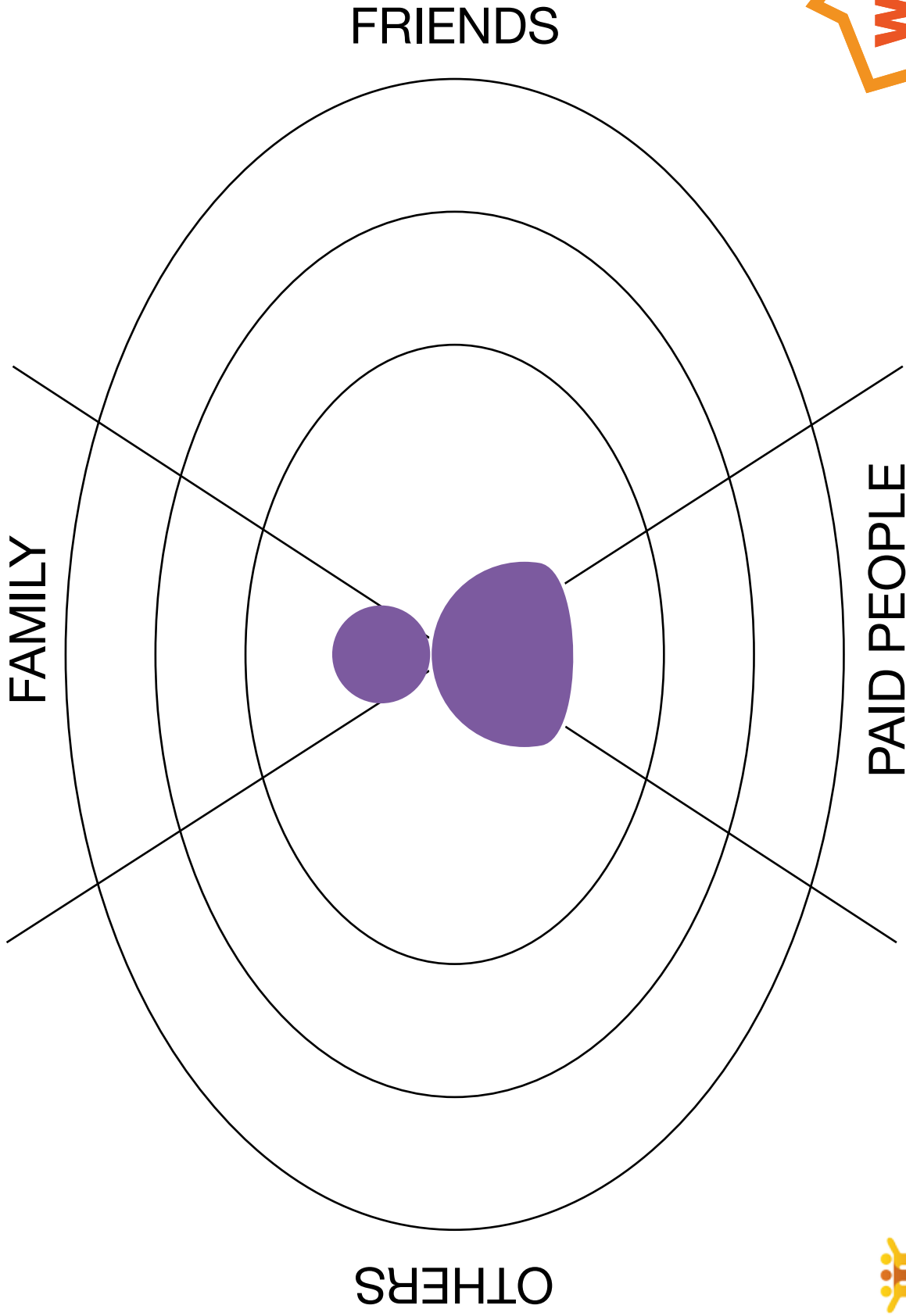
www.waindividualisedservices.org.au

Understanding decisions in the person's life

Decisions I make	Decisions I'm supported to make	Decisions that are made by others	Ways that the person can be meaningfully involved in decision making



Exploring the Important people in the person's life



Supported Decision Making

www.waindividualisedservices.org.au



Exploring the contributions of people in your life

People	Possible Contribution / Support



Important to

Important for



Supported Decision Making



Supporting Decision Making

Principles of Supported Decision Making

Supported Decision Making Approach and Practice

Supporting Decision Making Principles

Supported decision making is a term used to refer to a range of practices whereby people with disabilities are assisted to make or implement their own decisions.

Principles that surround Supported Decision Making

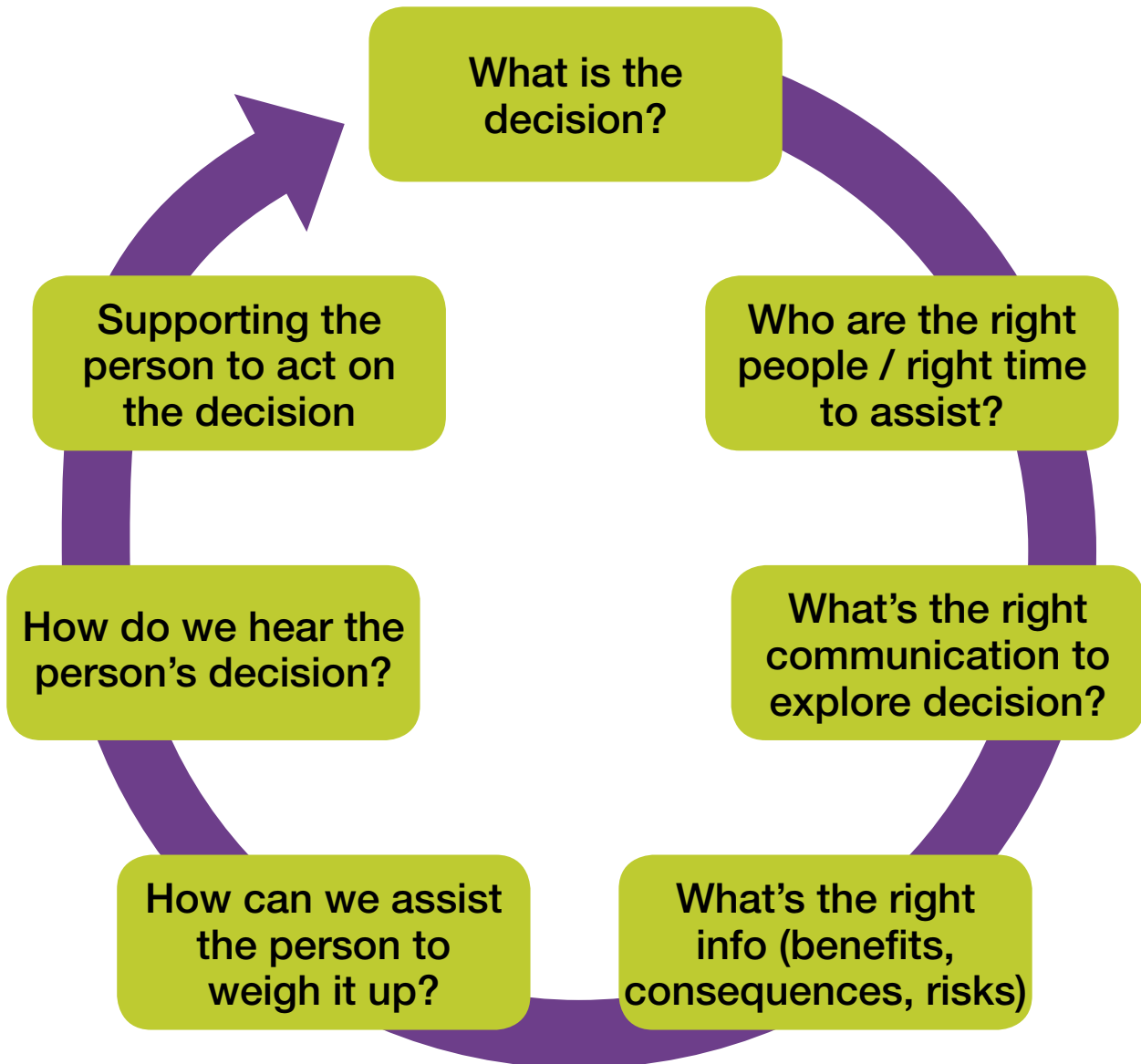


Project Principles

- We assume everyone has the capacity to make decisions, unless proved otherwise - **Assume I can.**
- Capacity is decision specific - **One decision at a time.**
- Support to make decisions needs to reflect good assistance for each person uniquely - **Understand the right assistance for me.**
- Everyone demonstrates preferences and these can be used as the building blocks of decisions - **Understand my preferences.**
- People have the right to make unwise decisions - **It's up to me.**
- People have the right to learn from experience - **Support me to experience choice.**
- People have the right to change their minds - **I can change my mind.**
- Every effort should be made to support people to make their decisions - **Have you explored all options to assist me.**
- Everyone has the right to be involved in decision making including substitute decision making - **Involve me in decisions about my life.**
- Supported decision making relies on integral assistance - **I have the right people supporting me and my decisions.**

Supporting Decision Making Principles

The process to follow when supporting people to make a decision.



What is the decision?

Getting clear about the actual decision that is facing the person begins the process. Often there can be multiple decisions all wrapped up in what looks to be one decision. An example may be the decision to go on holiday. Is this a decision about going on holiday? What needs to be considered? Things such as: where do I want to go? How much is it going to cost? When do I want to go? Who do I want to go with? What do I want to do?

Breaking down the decision into one area is really helpful, so in this example beginning with, ‘Do you want to go on a holiday?’ is the first decision. Getting **decision specific** helps to focus your attention as a supporter on the decision and how best to proceed to give the person the best chance possible to make the decision.

Who are the right people to assist the person to make this decision?

Many of us choose the person we want to assist us in decision making, based on the decision we are facing and the people who are available to us. For example not many of us would ask our parents to support us to explore decisions around intimate issues; equally we may only choose to explore those kinds of subjects with one or two of our closest friends.

Choosing the right person to assist with a decision is really important and understanding the people who are around and close to the person also helps, particularly if we understand what they can potentially contribute and if we know their areas of potential conflict.

People	Possible Contribution / Support	Potential Conflict of interest
<p><i>Example</i></p> <p>Kate – Johns mum</p>	<p>Love John to bits and will protect his interests.</p> <p>Wants John to be in control of as much of his life as possible – so will support John to be heard.</p> <p>Decisions such as day to day living, future planning, housing, work.</p>	<p>Concerns about John’s safety and risk taking.</p> <p>Wanting John to be safe so I may be anxious of new things that look too risky.</p> <p>Want to be involved in John’s life.</p>
<p>Ted – a long time supporter</p>	<p>Has a good understanding of what matters to John and what would make a good support for John.</p> <p>Has supported John to make decisions in the past.</p> <p>Decisions such as day to day, good support.</p>	<p>I think I know what good support should look like.</p> <p>I have views on different organisations based on my professional experiences.</p>

Another way to support the person to explore who they would like to assist them in making a particular decision is by using the following graphic. The graphic helps people to 'weigh up' their thoughts about what may or may not be useful to assist them in thinking about this decision.

What is the decision?



Who can help me make this decision?



Why I should choose them?



Why I shouldn't choose them?

Will the decision affect my support person?

What is the decision? **To go on holiday to Rottne**



Who can help me make this decision?



Louise - my support worker



Why I should choose them?

She will talk to my Mum if I need to

She likes me to be happy

She likes me to save my money



Why I shouldn't choose them?

Will the decision affect my support person?

When is the right time?

Working out the right time and place is crucial and offers the person the best chance of being able to consider options and make their decision. Some people find a quiet familiar space the best place to explore decision making, and others find a familiar environment can offer comfort and security to think through decisions. Considering the right place and time is based around what we specifically know about a person, what they like and don't like, and what works best for them. For example are they a morning person? Do they like a quiet space, music on; do they prefer a formal space, or an informal space etc.?

What is the right way to communicate this decision?

Understanding the person's communication is central to supporting people's decision making. You cannot underestimate the importance of this. There is some information about how to do this well in the Communication section of the resources. When supporting someone to make a decision, it is important the way in which the decision is presented, is in a way that the person can understand and they have a way of being able to communicate their decision.

What's the right information including benefits, consequences and risks?

Working out how best to present the decision is a process that the supporter should consider. What kind of information is right for this person i.e. using photos, showing videos, going and seeing something – consider all of the ways that the person prefers to view information. Keeping a balance of information for the person to consider is important.

Some people can process a lot of information and some people can process a limited amount of information at any given time. Determining the relevant information and amount that works best for each person, will support him or her in understanding the decision. This may mean limiting the amount of information to two options as opposed to having to choose from five options.

It can be very difficult to make a decision about something you have no experience of or frame of reference about. Working out ways we can experience or understand the decision and its consequences is important, particularly for people who have had limited experiences or opportunities to make decisions.

An example may be if you were considering trying surfing – going to watch surfers at the beach may be one simple way to understand it. Framing the decision and the information in a way that best supports the person to understand it enables them to be more in a position to make a decision.

We need to consider how we frame each decision by agreeing how best to present this information to the person. We can do this by asking ourselves – What information is needed for the person to understand and how best can we present it in a way that makes sense for them, in the context of who they are, and what we know about them?

Framing a Decision

What is the decision? (Be decision specific)	What information will help the person understand the decision?	How best to frame the decision to give the person the best chance to understand and make a decision?
Going on a holiday to New Zealand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on new zealand • Holiday brochures • Talking to people who have been there • Gathering information about costs, flights, accommodation and activities • Who to go with • How to pay for the holiday 	<p>Show pictures and videos of New Zealand</p> <p>Narrow down hotel options</p> <p>Create a visual budget</p> <p>Weighing up the decision exercise</p>

How can we assist the person to weigh up the decision?

When we are considering a decision to make, we naturally go through a process of thinking about what is good and what concerns us about it. Weighing up a decision is part of the decision making process and exploring the weight of the benefit and negatives can help people to make a decision. There are many ways to this – simply having the conversation about the pros (positives) and the cons (negatives) can be sufficient, but for some people actually weighing out the pros and cons is really useful. Depending upon what makes the most sense, working on the following template is an option or using a real set of weights (so there is a practical and visual representation of the ‘weighing’ up).

Weighing up a decision

What is the decision?



What is good about this?



What is not good about this?

How do we hear the person's decision?

Many people are expressing their wishes every day but are not always heard. It is vital that in supporting people in making decisions, people's wishes are respected and heard, and we discover ways to hear what people have to say.

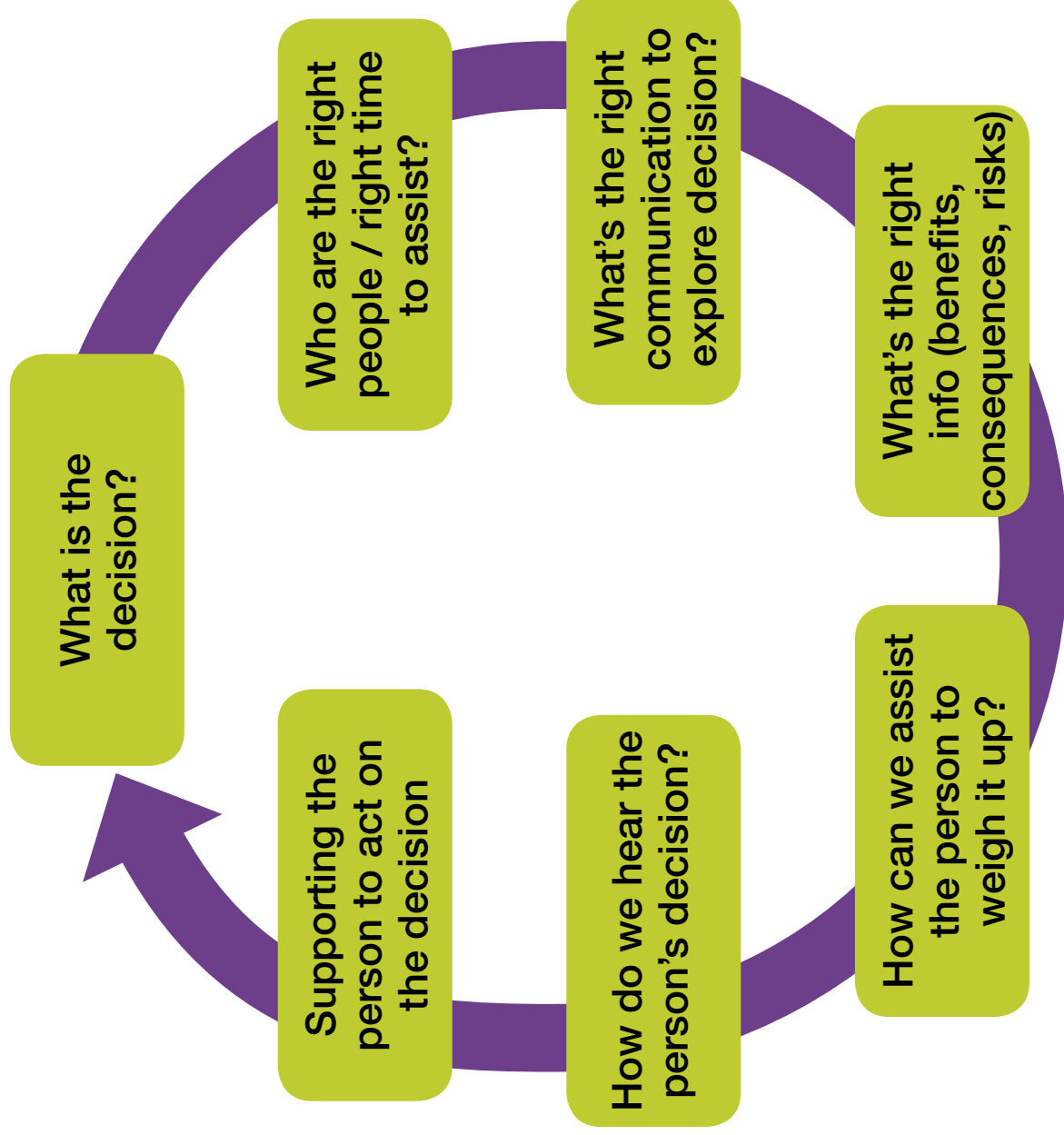
Often people can cajole, encourage, or even use specific tones of voice to people so they choose the outcome they want for the person. This is done with all the best of intention however – in supporting people in decision making we must be vigilant to hear and respect their decisions and be mindful of our input into the decision making process. When decisions have significant consequences for the person, our support needs to be more carefully considered when the person is weighing up the options.



Supported Decision Making

Resources

Supporting the person to make a decision



People	Possible Contribution / Support	Potential Conflict of interest



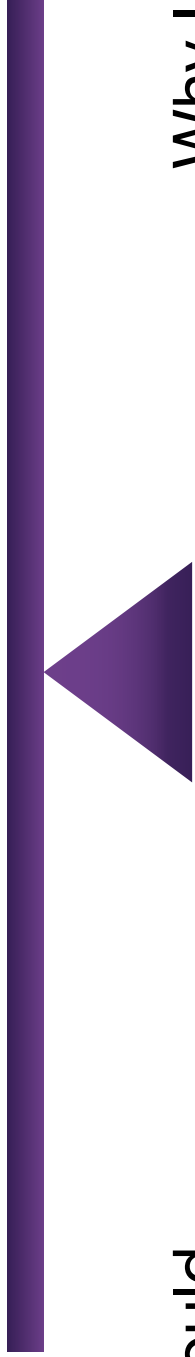
What is the decision?



Who can help me make this decision?



Why I should choose them?



Why I shouldn't choose them?

Will the decision affect my support person?



Framing a Decision

What is the decision? (Be decision specific)	What information will help the person understand the decision?	How best to frame the decision to give the person the best chance to understand and make a decision?

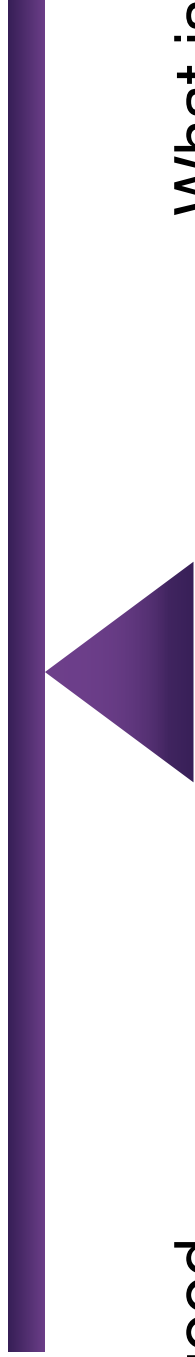


Weighing up a decision

What is the decision?



What is good about this?



What is not good about this?





Supported Decision Making



Good Assistance

What makes a good life?

The right assistance

Conflict of interest

Recording decision making

What makes a good life?

We all choose to live our lives in a way that makes sense to us based on our interests, what's important to us and what's important for our health and wellbeing. Having a good life is very individual – however, there are things that we have learnt that gives people a greater chance of having a good life.

In 1987 John O'Brien and Connie Lyle O'Brien embarked on a piece of research in Seattle on what makes a good quality of life. They developed a Framework that proposed five areas that appear to be important in shaping everyone's quality of life.

These areas include:

- Sharing ordinary places
- Making Choices
- Developing abilities
- Being treated with respect and having a valued social role
- Growing in relationships

John went on to advise the human services system about how they may consider their supports to people to ensure it supports people to have a good life and not get in the way.

These areas of a good life help us frame good support so the way we work needs to enhance the opportunities for people in these areas.

One way to consider this is thinking about support and how it works for people, does it get people closer to these areas or further away?

Working towards	A good life	Working against
	Sharing ordinary places	
	Making Choices	
	Developing abilities	
	Being treated with respect and having a valued social role	
	Growing in relationships	

This framework helps us consider the way that we support people and the way in which we enable people to make their own decisions.

Good assistance is of course, hugely dependent upon what makes sense for the person. People will often choose supporters who have similar interests, personality traits or particular skills and talents. Choosing who supports you is fundamental to good assistance which clearly has an impact on supported decision making.

Supporting people to consider who they would like to support them is vital.

Good Assistance

Kate Fulton shared her research in *Working on the Inside* which outlines areas that people and families have reported that makes good assistance for people who may rely on formal support.

The key areas include:

Be Present – focusing our attention on the here and now and really being present.

Check your intention –ensuring we see the meaning of our efforts and in particular being clear that your assistance is about supporting the person to make their own decision.

Explore your beliefs – understanding the beliefs you may hold that can impact on support to the person, particularly if you have a potential conflict of interest.

Be Positive – understanding how your attitude can shape everything and opens the door to positive change.

See Possibility – having the belief that people can and do make their own decisions and creativity can open the key to possibility.

Understand your impact – be someone who brings out the best in others, who understands their own impact on the person and learns to respond to this to ensure the person feels as comfortable as possible.

A shift in expertise

Many supporters coming into Human Services are taught both formally and informally about a range of theories and practices that can affect people and communities.

These theories and practices help us understand how certain factors can impact on people's quality of life and connection to community life. This may include topics such as the effects of discrimination, the likely consequences of segregation and the devastating effects of loss of power and control.

However this level of expertise or knowledge in understanding is not the same as an expertise in understanding the person, their family and their own circumstances.

People and families themselves are the experts on their own lives and the solutions that will work for them in their own life and context.

Getting clear on expertise is really helpful when considering good assistance in decision making. Understanding that the person holds their own expertise about who they are and what makes sense to them in their life.

Good assistance takes understanding and responding to this when supporting people in their own decision making. Offering support to explore and analyse the decisions in light of what's important to them and for their health and wellbeing.

People and families themselves are the experts on their own lives and the solutions that will work for them in their own life and context.

Workers who think they know the answer or solution for the person, or they 'know what's best' can clearly undermine people and families own expertise.

The following chart is taken from [Working on the Inside](#) and is aimed at helping people to explore how we can best develop these attributes for ourselves.



Working on the Inside – Personal Checklist

Approaches	Things to try and develop for yourself and your colleagues	Things I am going to try
Exploring Expertise	<p>How do you value and draw on people and families expertise within your work place?</p> <p>How do you support and enable the person to be and act as the expert?</p> <p>Think about the conversations you have with the people you support and your colleagues – do we acknowledge expertise?</p> <p>What would people and families say about this?</p>	
Being Present	<p>How do you stay present – what helps?</p> <p>How could you explore mindfulness and or meditation techniques?</p> <p>Take moments of your day to be really present and take time to notice when you're not.</p> <p>How can you help yourself and your colleagues be more mindful?</p>	

<p>Understanding your intention</p>	<p>Describe your own intentions – the bigger picture that you want to achieve.</p> <p>Look at your week and the activities you support people to participate in – are you clear about the overall intention?</p> <p>How do you help the team understand their intentions?</p> <p>Explore with people and families their intentions – what is their purpose?</p> <p>What does this mean for you and your role?</p>	
<p>Understanding your Beliefs</p>	<p>Explore the stories you tell yourself about the people you are connected to including your colleagues.</p> <p>Does the team have a team story about who you are as team – what you are supporting people to achieve?</p> <p>What are the stories about families telling you?</p> <p>How can you influence the stories that people tell about the people you support?</p>	

<p>Positive Attitude</p>	<p>Understand the things that help you be and stay in a positive frame of mind and make sure this is included in your day.</p> <p>Begin to challenge your own negative self-talk and replace it with at least one positive comment.</p> <p>Look for the positive qualities and attributes in others.</p> <p>How can you help yourself and the team see the positive?</p>	
<p>Seeing Possibility</p>	<p>Begin dreaming for yourself – what would an ideal life look like for you? What small steps can you take to get you closer to that image?</p> <p>Dream with and alongside the people you are connected to – what would a fantastic life look like for them – what small steps could you take to get closer to it?</p>	
<p>Understanding your own impact</p>	<p>Begin by asking for feedback from people you trust – do my emotions impact on others?</p> <p>Ask for feedback from colleagues, people and families.</p> <p>Reflect on your week explore how the way you were feeling may have impacted on the task or activity.</p>	

Conflict of Interest

The best support when supporting people with decision making is that the person assisting is doing so with integrity. This means being honest and upfront about any potential conflict of interests and exploring if there are other ways the person may get assistance to make this decision.

A conflict of interest means that the person offering assistance has a vested interest in the outcomes of the decision, so they may have a strong view on what the person should or shouldn't do. It may be that the supporter is affected by the outcome of the decision, so therefore has a personal interest in the outcome.

When we are supporting people in decision making it is useful to ask yourself:

- Do I have a vested interest in this decision?
- Explore and recognise what the conflict of interest is
- Explore how you can support the person impartially with this conflict of interest
- Explore if there is someone else around the person who may not have the conflict of interest

We have found being really upfront about potential conflicts of interest is very helpful. Exploring it within teams can also be helpful, as sometimes it can be hard to admit to some conflicts of interest. Many teams work on the following chart to begin opening up about potential conflicts of interest and to create clarity in who are the best people to assist with certain decisions.

People	Possible Contribution / Support	Potential Conflict of interest
<i>Example</i>		
Kate – Johns mum	<p>Love John to bits and will protect his interests.</p> <p>Wants John to be in control of as much of his life as possible – so will support John to be heard.</p> <p>Decisions such as day to day living, future planning, housing, work.</p>	<p>Johns safety and risk taking.</p> <p>I want John to be safe so can get frightened of new things that look too risky.</p> <p>I want to be involved in Johns life.</p>
Ted – a long time supporter	<p>Has a good understanding of what matters to John and what would make a good support for John.</p> <p>Has supported John to make decisions in the past.</p> <p>Decisions such as day to day, good support.</p>	<p>I think I know what good support should look like and be.</p> <p>I have views on different organisations based on my professional experiences.</p>

Getting clear on how to support the person with decision making

As previously mentioned everyone is unique and although we have some principles to guide supported decision making and some areas that we know help – it is largely based on what works well for the person. Having clarity around decision making is really helpful for the person and their supporters.

Recording and regularly reviewing the decisions that the person makes with support is essential. This provides an agreement on the decisions and how the person will be involved in them.

Recording Decision Making

What is the decision?	Who are the right people to assist the person with this decision? Where is the right place to explore it?	What's the right way to communicate the decision and explore it?	What's the right way to present the info? Key points (benefits, consequences, risks)	How can we assist the person to weigh it up?	How do we hear the person's decision/choice?	How do we support the person to act on the decision?
Going on a holiday in march 2015	Dad and best friend John Talk in a quiet place	Use communication board	Visual props such as pictures and videos Visit the airport Sleep at a friends place over night	Understand that there will be time away from home Look at the total cost and how that will impact other things	Understanding a person's communication Having people involved who know the person well	Assist with on-line bookings Practice packing the suitcase
Be clear about the actual decision. Decision specific	What are the benefits/conflicts?	What do we know about the person's preferred way of communication?	What have we learnt works best for the person i.e. photos, real experience or expose?	What do we know is important to/for the person?	Be clear about how we will know the persons has made the decision or choice	How do we support the person to act and observe their response?



Supported Decision Making

Resources

Working towards	A good life	Working against
	Sharing ordinary places	
	Making Choices	
	Developing abilities	
	Being treated with respect and having a valued social role	
	Growing in relationships	



Working on the Inside – Personal Checklist



Approaches	Things to try and develop for yourself and your colleagues	Things I am going to try
Exploring Expertise		
Being Present		



Understanding your
intention

Understanding your
Beliefs

Positive Attitude		
Seeing Possibility		
Understanding your own impact		

Recording Decision Making

What is the decision?	Who are the right people to assist the person with this decision? Where is the right place to explore it?	What's the right way to communicate the decision and explore it?	What's the right way to present the info? Key points (benefits, consequences, risks)	How can we assist the person to weigh it up?	How do we hear the person's decision/choice?	How do we support the person to act on the decision?
Be clear about the actual decision. Decision specific	What are the benefits/conflicts?	What do we know about the person's preferred way of communication?	What have we learnt works best for the person i.e. photos, real experience or expose?	What do we know is important to/for the person?	Be clear about how we will know the persons has made the decision or choice	How do we support the person to act and observe their response?



Supported Decision Making



Understanding the Person's Communication

Understanding the person's communication style

Developing a communication passport

Understanding the person's communication

Communication is really important in supporting people well and especially important when supporting people in decision making. Communication is a two way process. As with any message, one person expresses it and someone else has to understand and receive it.

We communicate: to share who we are, to share information, to form relationships, to share what we want and need for ourselves and from others, to learn about life, to be offered choices, to express feelings, to understand others, to request information, to have access to information, to be included socially, and most importantly to seek and reject assistance.

In exploring people's communication we need to consider one's ability to understand spoken or written language. Exploring communication requires a willingness to supplement or support the spoken word by using objects, photographs, line drawings, symbols or sign. In order to do this well, we need to know which method or combination of methods suit each person best.

Being able to express what is inside your head: your thoughts, feelings, desires, wants and wishes to another person is the essence of communication.

All people have their own way of expressing themselves; for some people, this may mean using other methods than speech alone. Objects, photographs, line drawings, symbols, signing and /or body language may be used to express information.

Our responsibility when supporting people, is a commitment to continually listen to, and learn with, the person. This includes striving to support the person's communication, ensuring they can direct their own life, interact with us and other people, and make their contribution.

To be a good communication partner we need the desire to really hear a person and learn how the person communicates with you and how you communicate with them.

Many people use informal communication styles that are unique to them and they are sometimes heavily reliant upon the people who know and understand them well. It is really important that a person's unique communication style is recorded to ensure that those around the person can learn their particular style.

One way to do this is to explore what we know and understand about the person's communication style now and build on this learning. This is a really important foundation for supporting people with decision making. **How can you possibly support a person in making a decision if you don't know how they communicate?**

By working through the following communication chart, (Communication charts adapted from Fulton, Woodley and Sanderson), this approach helps everyone understand how the person may be communicating.

The following chart explores how I communicate with others

At this time	The person says or does this	We think it means	You should do this?
<p>1. When does this happen? Are there particular times / places?</p> <p>Any time In the morning</p>	<p>2. What do you see the person do?</p> <p>The persons neck goes red Asking a lot of questions about other people, doesn't seem to be satisfied with the answers</p>	<p>3. What does everyone think it means? Sometimes we may be best guessing.</p> <p>Embarrassed Tom needs to know what is happening today, but doesn't know how to ask</p>	<p>4. What are we all agreeing to do as a response?</p> <p>Provide reassurance that it is ok- not the end of the world Sit down with tom and show him his 'now and then' board, and put the right photos on for the day</p>

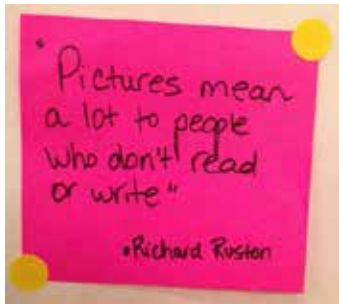
The following chart explores how others communicate with the person

At this time or in this situation	When we want the person to know or understand this or do this	You should do or say this
At 7.00 O'clock in the morning	Its time for work	Show me the work photo symbol and tell me its time for work

Developing a communication passport or personal profile

Personal communication passports or personal profiles are a practical and person centred way of supporting people. It is a way of pulling complex information together and presenting it in an easy-to-follow format aiming to:

- Present the person positively as an individual, not as a set of 'problems' or disabilities
- Provide a place for the person's own views and preferences to be recorded and drawn to the attention of others
- Reflect the person's unique character, sense of humour etc
- Describe the person's most effective means of communication and how others can best communicate with, and support the person
- Draw together information from past and present, and from different contexts, to help staff and conversation partners understand the person and have successful interactions
- Place equal value on the views of all who know the person well, along with the views of the specialist professionals



Communication passports and personal profiles discover and describe who the person is, what is important to the person in everyday life and what other people need to know or do so the person is able to be listened to, heard and understood in relation to how they communicate. Not everyone would necessarily call one of these a 'Passport' as such. But whatever 'name' is used, the principle is the same, i.e. important information distilled into a simple and easily accessible format for the person. The areas that are generally covered include but are not limited to:

- My Journey
- Who I am
- Things you need to know about me
- Who is important to me – people in my life
- Things that others like and admire about me
- Things I like and dislike (e.g. food, places, people, hobbies, animals)
- Things I like to do and where I like to go (e.g. weekends, days, nights)
- Who I like to do things with
- What I like to talk about
- Things that are important to me
- Things that are important for me (eg. My health and wellbeing)
- How I communicate (e.g. when I do or do not need assistance, sadness, happiness, excitement, anxiety, fear, boredom, restlessness, cold, hot, sick)
- What you need to do to understand and support me and my communication





Supported Decision Making

Resources

The following chart explores how I communicate with others

At this time	The person says or does this	We think it means	You should do this?
<p>1. When does this happen? Are there particular times / places?</p>	<p>2. What do you see the person do?</p>	<p>3. What does everyone think it means? Sometimes we may be best guessing.</p>	<p>4. What are we all agreeing to do as a response?</p>



The following chart explores how others communicate with the person

At this time or in this situation	When we want the person to know or understand this or do this	You should do or say this



Developing a Communication Passport

The areas that are generally covered include but are not limited to:

- My Journey
- Who I am
- Things you need to know about me
- Who is important to me – people in my life
- Things that others like and admire about me
- Things I like and dislike (e.g. food, places, people, hobbies, animals)
- Things I like to do and where I like to go (e.g. weekends, days, nights)
- Who I like to do things with
- What I like to talk about
- Things that are important to me
- Things that are important for me (eg. My health and wellbeing)
- How I communicate (e.g. when I do or do not need assistance, sadness, happiness, excitement, anxiety, fear, boredom, restlessness, cold, hot, sick)
- What you need to do to understand and support me and my communication





