

Recording Supported Decision Making

Recording a decision making process is a way of highlighting the right people to be involved and the right support to be given. It can also help decision makers and decision supporters to think about how to safely implement a decision without restricting the person.

Michelle Browning¹ studied how people with intellectual disability were helped to make decisions in Canada. She found there were a number of things which could make it hard for decision makers to say what they wanted (express their will and preferences during the decision making process).

Sometimes decision makers lacked confidence because they did not have a lot of experience making decisions.

Sometimes decision supporters believed they knew what was best for the decision maker and so they didn't ask what they wanted or listen when the decision maker tried to tell them.

Sometimes the relationship between the decision maker and their supporter was poor because it lacked respect, trust and understanding.

Sometimes decision makers needed time to understand their options. When supporters were rushed and under time pressure it could make it difficult for decision makers to say what they wanted.

Sometimes the decision was hard. Even with support some decision makers found it difficult to understand the consequences of the decision and how they might change what they wanted.

¹ Michelle Jennett Browning

Developing an Understanding of Supported Decision Making Practice in Canada:
The Experiences of People with Intellectual Disabilities and Their Supporters February 2018



Recording Supported Decision Making

What is the decision?



Going on a holiday in march next year.

Who are the right people to assist? Where is the right place?



*Dad and my best friend, John.
My sister, Jill, who's just been on a holiday.
We'll talk in a quiet place.*

What's the right way to talk about the decision?



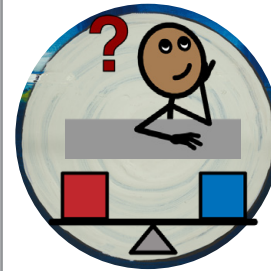
*Use my communication board.
Make me a new section for 'holidays'.
Add images or symbols related to holidays eg. who could come with me; where we could go, what we could do on holidays.*

What's the right way to present the information?



*Show me pictures and videos of people on holiday.
Help me to hear from people about their holidays.
Take me to visit the airport.
I'll sleep over at a friend's place.*

How can we assist the person to weigh it up?



*Help me understand that a holiday means time away from home.
Support me to add up the cost and understand how that will impact on my other decisions.
Help me make a savings plan.*

How do we hear the person's decision?



*Understand my communication.
Have people involved who know me well.
Keep checking in with me about this decision.
Give me time to make my decision.*

How do we support the person to act on their decision?



*Assist me with on-line bookings.
Practice packing the suitcase with me.
Setup my safety and backup plans with me.*

Recording Supported Decision Making

What is the decision?



Choosing the right support worker for me.

Who are the right people to assist? Where is the right place?



My brother, Edward, because he knows me and how I communicate well. If he isn't free then I'm okay for Mum or Dad to help.
Home is where I feel most comfortable to do this.

What's the right way to talk about the decision?



Talk to me using a few short sentences and questions.
Use PECS to help me understand how I can choose a support worker.*

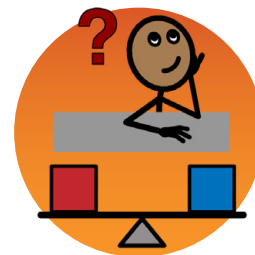
*Picture Exchange Communication System.

What's the right way to present the information?



Meet potential support workers face to face with my brother.
Notice how they interact and respond to me.
Talk with me about the people we've interviewed using PECS and photos. Put photos on my device or communication system for me to look at in my own time.*

How can we assist the person to weigh it up?



I can use a balance/scale to weigh up what's good and not good about choosing a particular person.
Give it a trial.
The person works with me a couple of times. My brother keeps an eye on what's happening.

How do we hear the person's decision?



My brother knows the sounds I make when I'm happy. He notices the movements I make when I want something to happen. He uses PECS and photos to check my decision with me. If I'm not sure he will give me more time.*

How do we support the person to act on their decision?



Help me use my communication system to let the person know that I want to extend the trial period of them supporting me.

Recording Supported Decision Making

What is the decision?



Be clear about the actual decision.

Who are the right people to assist? Where is the right place?



What knowledge of the person and bias do they bring?

What's the right way to talk about the decision?



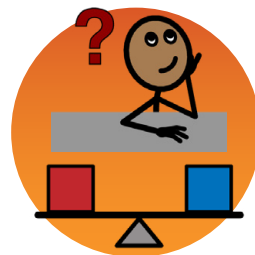
What do we know about the person's preferred way of communicating?

What's the right way to present the information?



What works best for the person, for example photos, real experiences?

How can we assist the person to weigh it up?



For example, using scales, listing what's important to and for the person, having a short term trial.

How do we hear the person's decision?



What verbal and non-verbal communication will you be looking for?

How do we support the person to act on their decision?



Who will observe how the person is responding and for how long?