



**Decision Making
Possibilities**

9x VIDEOS



Supported Decision Making Foundations

Video Reflection Questions and Resources

These nine short videos by Dr Michelle Browning are for individuals and groups of decision supporters to assist their learning about supported decision making. Take notes and create opportunities to talk about what you are learning with other people in your network.



9x VIDEOS



A More Inclusive Way Forward

(2:11)

Video one introduces you to Michelle and supported decision making as an alternative to guardianship.



What is Supported Decision Making?

(1:44)

Video two explains supported decision making is the process of providing practical assistance with decision making and offers examples of what this looks like generally and specifically for people with complex communication access needs.



After watching the video, you are invited to watch a Ted inspired talk by Dr Jo Watson.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qMerG7CULJE>



Reflection

- How important to you is having autonomy and control over your life?
- Was there an idea or experience discussed in the video that resonated for you?

Why did it resonate?

Are you willing to share this insight with the network you are a part of?



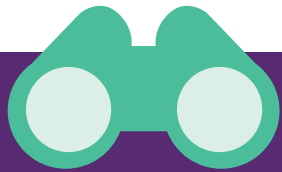
Aims of Supported Decision Making

(2:04)

Video three explores the two aims of supported decision making: enabling self-determination and supporting the exercise of legal capacity. After watching the video, you are invited to watch Michael Bach discussing why supporting the exercise of legal capacity is so important for people with disability.



[Looking Differently at Disability and Decision Making - YouTube](#)



Reflection

- Have you ever considered what it would be like to have your legal capacity removed?

To be considered a legal non-entity with respect to the decision making which shapes your life?

When in Canada conducting my doctoral research, I had the great privilege of meeting Ailsa (not her real name), the mother of a 50-year-old man who had complex communication access needs. Over decades, Ailsa fought hard to ensure her son stayed out of institutionalised care and railed against a system that expected her to accept guardianship was necessary for him because of his disability. She said,

"The fundamental problem is that nobody looks at guardianship as it would affect them. They only look at guardianship as it affects somebody they might have some concern about but, they don't see as an equal. If we could only get people to think 'what am I going to feel like if I was in that position?' I know what I would feel. I don't want to be a non-entity. I don't want to be just written off. I don't want to be in a situation where nobody has to, whether I fully understand or not, has to even include me and that's what guardianship provides for. It provides for sole authority over another person. And however much one does consult, it's still the other person's decision. It's always the guardian under the law, it's always the guardian's position... I just find it unacceptable that it's the best we can think of. Because I don't want to be considered a nothing and neither would the person if they stopped to think, neither would the person saying its ok."



Decision Support is a Right (1:38)

Video four discusses how decision support is a fundamental human right confirmed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.



Reflection

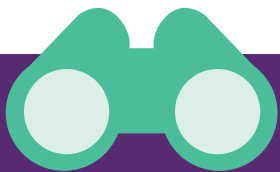
- How does this idea of decision support being a fundamental right make you feel?
 - How important do you think your role is as someone's decision supporter?
- If you are already supporting someone with decision making and connected with their other decision supporters, you may like to also consider the following questions:
- How did we hear from the Decision Maker today when we were talking about/ exploring?
 - Can you recall a time when you shared an experience with the Decision Maker and they communicated a preference or a decision which you've been able to act on?
 - What is it you bring to your role as a decision supporter?
 - What is a 'good decision'? (What does *good* look like for this Decision Maker?)
 - What have you learnt from the Decision Maker about how they communicate?
 - Have there been times when the Decision Maker's choices have not been acknowledged, interpreted or acted on?



Rethinking Capacity

(3:12)

Video five explores how 'decision making capability' is an alternative way of thinking about decision making capacity. A person's abilities plus the supports and accommodations available to them in the decision making process determine their decision making capability.



Reflection

- Do you like this different way of thinking about decision making capacity?
Does it resonate for you and your experience supporting someone to make decisions?
- Does this concept of decision making capability change how you think and feel about the decision making ability of the person at the centre of your network?



A Different Starting Point (3:58)

Video six explores how the way we think about disability changes the starting point of supported decision making.



If you would like to learn more about the social model of disability here are links to a few resources online:

[Social model of disability – People with Disability Australia \(pwd.org.au\)](http://pwd.org.au)

[Social Model of Disability explained: who, what and why \(disabilityhorizons.com\)](http://disabilityhorizons.com)

If you're a book worm you might enjoy getting hold of:

[Shakespeare, T. \(2006\). *Disability rights and wrongs*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.](#)



Reflection

- Do you see disability as a characteristic of the person at the centre of your network?
- What aspects of society do you think most disable the person at the centre of your network?

For example, attitudes, communication access, physical environment etc.



Assume Decision Making Ability

(2:57)



Reflection

- Did you inherit your assumptions and beliefs about the person's decision-making ability from others? For example, other staff you work with or other members of your family.
- Has your thinking been limited by what other people have told you is possible? For example, have health professionals or lawyers assessed the person as incapable.
- Have you had the opportunity to see people with complex communication access needs making decisions with support and directing their own lives?

Video seven explores how assumptions and beliefs about a person's decision making ability can affect the responsiveness of decision supporters.



The research mentioned in the video can be explored in the journal article available on the WaiS My Rights website:

Watson, J. (2016). Assumptions of decision-making capacity: The role supporter attitudes play in the realisation of article 12 for people with severe or profound intellectual disability. *Laws*, 5(6), 1-9. doi: 10.3390/laws5010006



Understanding Will and preferences

(3:09)

Video eight clarifies supported decision making is directed by the will and preferences of decision makers. It explores what is meant by the term will and preferences and how decision supporters need to acknowledge, interpret and act on the decision maker's will and preferences in relation to a specific decision opportunity.



Reflection

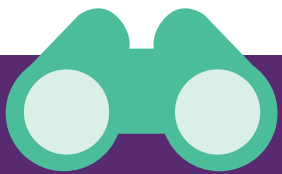
- Can you think of a time when you assumed a person's will and preferences rather than asking them directly? When you reflect on this time, is there a chance your assumptions may have limited the person's opportunities or options?
- What actions could you take as an individual and as part of the network to ensure you are not assuming to know your decision maker's will and preferences?



Knowing the Person as Fundamental to Interpreting Their Preferences

(4:11)

Video nine explores how knowing the person you support is essential to being able to interpret their will and preferences. It uses a story about Penny and her son Alex to demonstrate how knowing a person's life history, prior experiences and previously expressed preferences are necessary to being able to interpret what they are communicating accurately and respond appropriately.



Reflection

- How well do you know the decision maker at the centre of your network?
- How confident do you feel recognising and interpreting their expressions of preference?
- What actions could you take to get to know the decision maker more deeply and become more confident recognising and interpreting their expressions of preference?



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