

Dealing with challenges in providing decision-making support

Decision-making support for people with cognitive disability

Information sheet for disability support workers

Providing decision-making support is going to be challenging at times and is not always straightforward. Here are some things you will need to keep in mind.

Remain neutral

Being neutral means not influencing the person to make one decision over another because of your own beliefs, or because it is the decision you would make if you were in their shoes. To remain neutral:

- Be aware of your own likes and beliefs.
- Reflect on whether your own likes and beliefs are influencing you.
- If you think you can't avoid influencing someone, find someone else to provide support for that decision.

Supporters may have different opinions that cause conflict

Supporters may disagree about a decision which may create conflict or tension. For example, families may disagree with direct support workers and vice versa. To help work through conflict:

- Understand each others roles, motivations and strengths.
- Be respectful of each others views and opinions.
- Agree to be open and honest with each other.
- Be willing to talk about conflict.
- Think about how you will work out any issues, if they come up.

Manage risk and avoid the “best interest” approach

There are often risks in making decisions, and everyone has the right to make poor decisions, or badly timed decisions. To manage risks and avoid the “best interest” approach:

- Follow your workplaces policies and procedures.
- Check the person understands what might happen as a result of a decision, and he or she understands this and the risk involved.
- Make a plan for how to manage or reduce risk.

Limits in resources to make a decision happen

Check what resources are available and manage the person's hopes about what is and isn't possible through the decision-making process:

- Explain what is a realistic option for now and a possibility for the future.
- Help the person work out priorities.

Remember

- Decision-making support may be challenging at times.
- There are ways to manage challenges that arise.
- Do not impose your beliefs and views on the person.
- Conflict may arise when providing decision-making support.
- All decisions involve some risk.