



Making Lives Personal

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Decisions, Decisions!

We all have to make them, big or small, easy or difficult. From what to make for dinner tonight, getting a puppy, buying a home, going to Tim Hortons or McDonalds for breakfast.....we make decisions every day, all day long.

Have you ever had a decision to make and just wanted someone else to decide for you? Maybe you have experienced a time when there was a large life decision to make and you had to consult with a number of people to get different perspectives before making a final decision. Possibly, that decision was ultimately for someone else to make but you wanted to make sure your input was received and respected.

Example:

It's tax time. Everyone gets their taxes done and hopefully gets a return. My return came in recently and my husband had his own ideas of how to spend it. My plans were very different. It is technically my money; however I share my life and income with my family, especially my husband. It was important that I listen to his perspective and requests; balance them with my own and make a decision about how to spend that money or save that money.

*So the decision to be made was **what to do with that money**, I needed to **include my husband in the decision making** but the **decision was ultimately mine**. I chose to spend a little on myself, pay some bills and save the rest. I used his perspective to help me decide where to put that money as it affects him as well.*

When supporting people in our job we need to be conscious of the important decisions in their daily life, who they would like to help them if anyone, ultimately we want people we are supporting to be their own decision makers. Sometimes we are supporting people who have substitute decision makers; substitute decision making does not mean complete loss of control. It remains just as important that we support the person to be as included in all of their decisions to the best of their ability. We support them in having as much control as possible while advocating for substitute decision makers to make final decisions only in cases of risks in health and safety. Sometimes people prefer to let someone else make a decision for them once they have been given all the information they need to think about it; often people don't even want all of the relevant information, they just want someone to make the decision and they will follow along. Many times decisions are out of our hands and we need to wait for Ministry or management approval.

The bottom line is when there are decisions to be made, how can we ensure that people who are affected the most by the decision own control or most of the control over the final results?

Decision Making Profile and Agreements

Decision Making Profile

How I like to get information	How to present choices to me	Ways you can help me understand	When do I make decisions the best?	When is a bad time for me to make a decision?
verbally	Sit with me privately and explain	Rephrase your wording when I ask	Mid morning	Evening
in writing	Write choices on separate sheets of paper	Help me research on the computer	First thing in the morning	Any time after lunch

Decision Making Agreement

Decision	How I must be involved Who else should be involved?	Who makes the final decision?
To attend a party and drink alcohol when on medication that reacts to alcohol	I will discuss with people closest to me (partner, family etc.). I will gather their input and decide how to reduce chances of being ill. I may choose not to take my medication that day, attend and not drink or ignore the warnings and live with the consequences	I do
To move	Talk to me about the options, support me to look at apartments, my substitute decision maker should be involved as well as my roommate	I do
How much support I want/need in a week	Sit with me and discuss my needs and wants, explain your perspective of my needs/wants, listen to me and do your best to accommodate what I want. Include my substitute decision maker and support worker	My substitute decision maker
What I will have for dinner	Explain the choices to me and I will give you my top two preferences	Cook decides which one they feel like cooking

How can we use them in our work?

- Someone you work with has had a competency assessment and deemed “ not competent to make important decisions”, a **decision making agreement** will help you to identify the important decisions that need to be made, how the person can be most involved in the decision and who makes the final decision (some final decisions can continue to be owned by the person)
- A **decision making profile** can be developed with a person when learning about how to support them in making important decisions or informing other staff about how best to approach offering choices and decision making opportunity to someone.