

Supported decision-making Factsheet

A clear path to care.

Supporting a person to make a decision

A person's decision making capacity must be assumed unless there is evidence to the contrary. The factors that should be taken into account when considering if a person has decision making capacity include whether or not a person can:

- > understanding any information that may be relevant to the decision, including the consequences
- > retaining such information, even for a short time
- > using information to make decisions
- > communicating the decision (in any way).

If a person is having difficulty in making their own decisions, they should be given support to make them, before being assessed as not having decision-making capacity.

You can support a person to make a decision by:

a) Giving the person the relevant information

- > Consider who would be best to have the conversation with the person about the decision (this could be a combination of a professional, the Substitute Decision-Maker (if one is appointed), a trusted relative or friend of the person).
- > Take time to explain anything that is relevant or might help the person to make the decision.
- > Don't overload the person with more information than necessary.
- > Describe any foreseeable risks and benefits.
- > If there are options, give the information about the choices in a balanced way.

b) Communication

- > Consider the best time to communicate with the person (e.g. are there times of the day when the person is more alert?).
- > Be prepared to have more than one conversation with the person about the decision that has to be made.
- > If the person has hearing difficulties ensure that appropriate aids are used.
- > Does the person require an interpreter (including sign language).
- > Use simple language - avoid jargon or complex medical terms.
- > If appropriate, use pictures and objects to communicate with the person.
- > Speak at an appropriate speed and volume.
- > Ask one question at a time and wait for a response before continuing.
- > Be aware of cultural and religious factors which might influence the person's way of thinking, communicating and behaving.

c) Location

- > If possible, choose a location where the person feels most at ease to have a discussion.
- > Choose a quiet place where interruptions are unlikely and without background noise.

For more information

SA Health
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Subject line: Advance Care Directive

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