



WEST VIRGINIA

EMPOWERED & ABLE!

My Decision-Making Tool-Kit

MAKING DECISIONS

A future plan is all about YOU. It is about your skills, interests, abilities, dreams, and goals. It is also about what help you want and need in your life.

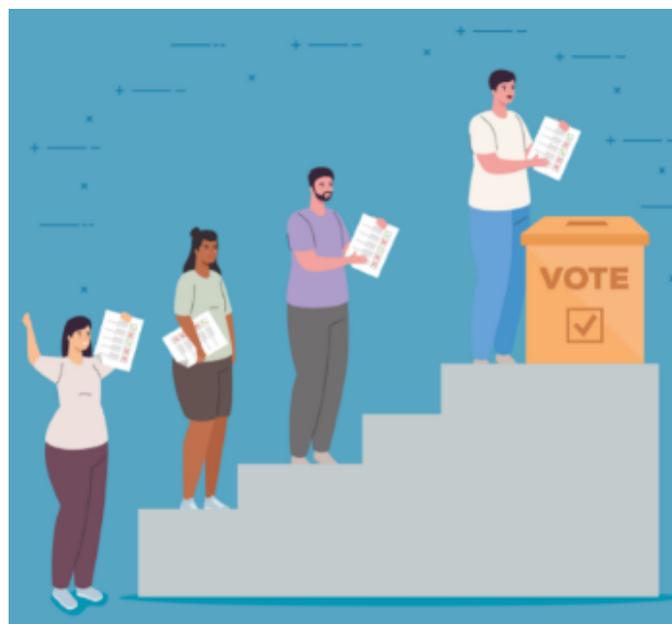
- ③ When you are given choices or options, you must choose what you want to do. This is called making a **decision**.
- ③ Everyone has the right to make decisions about choices that will impact their own lives. These decisions should be respected by others.
- ③ This is called **self-determination**.



Decisions must be made every day.

Some decisions are easy (what to wear, what to eat, what to watch on TV).

Some decisions are hard (where to work, what to spend money on, where to live).



MAKING DECISIONS WITH SUPPORT



- ① You have the right to make your own choices, even if you need help.
- ① Many people need help to make important decisions.
- ① Your right to make choices should not be taken away just because you need help.
- ① You might need help making some decisions and not others.
- ① The type of help you need for one decision might be different for another decision
- ① If you ask for help, people should communicate with you in the style that you prefer and understand
- ① The person or people who help you are called “supporters”.



DO I HAVE A DECISION TO MAKE?

Day-To-Day

- what to wear
- when and what to eat
- when to get up or go to bed

Lifestyle and Recreation

- who to be friends with
- having intimate relationships
- involvement in cultural or religious activities
- shopping
- going to bars / theaters
- holiday traditions

Education and Employment

- what school, university or other setting
- what type of job you would like to do

Financial

- budgeting
- buying everyday items
- paying bills
- saving for expensive items
- banking

Living Arrangements

- who to live with
- where to live
- decorating your home or room
- how you like your home to look

Access to Services

- choosing the services you want and need
- choosing service providers and support staff
- what is in your program plan or IEP

Healthcare

- what doctor, dentist, therapist you go to
- dietary decisions
- whether to exercise or not
- what times to take your medicines

Legal

- signing contracts
- providing consent
- giving power of attorney
- getting married or divorced
- making a will



WHAT SUPPORTS ARE NEEDED?

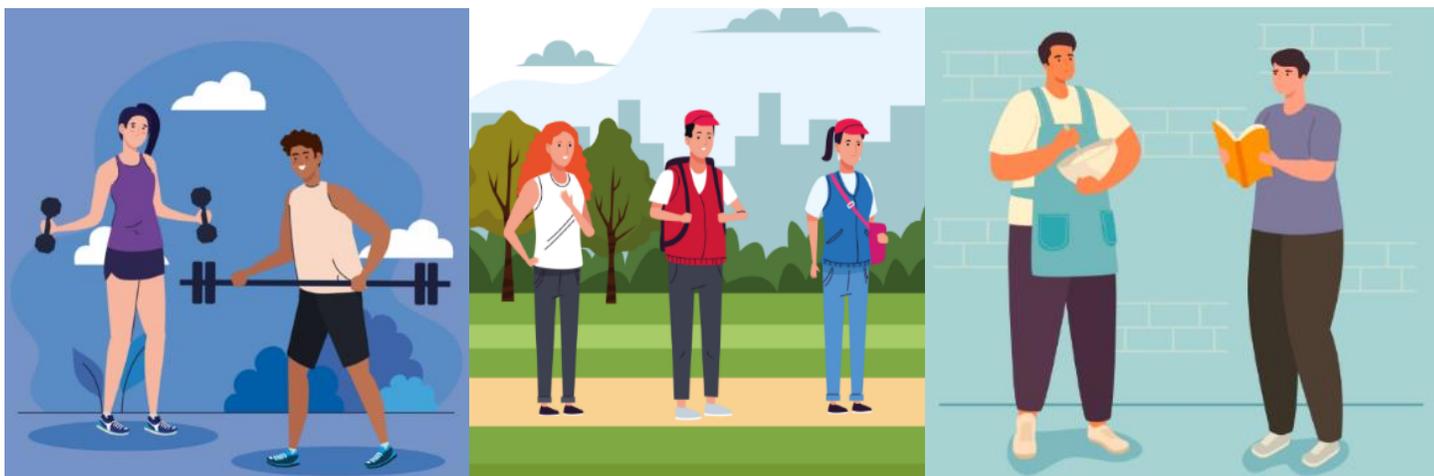
Identify the areas of your life you will need support with and think about the ways your support team can assist you.

- ⊙ What are your goals?
- ⊙ What do you need to reach those goals?
- ⊙ What's in your way or keeping you from reaching your goals?
- ⊙ Who can help you and how?

**Most people need support to make decisions at different times.
Support looks different for each person and each decision.**

You may need support to:

- ⊙ Explain the decision you have to make and how it may impact your life
- ⊙ Organize paperwork and assist with meeting deadlines
- ⊙ Help you research options
- ⊙ Make sure you have the tools you need to communicate to other people
- ⊙ Make sure other people respect your decision



HOW SHOULD DECISIONS BE MADE?

There is no right or wrong way to make a decision.

Think about these three important personal things:

- ⦿ Preferences - What do you like or don't like? (hobby, colors, food, people, etc.)
- ⦿ Values – Everyone has different values but they are a part of who you are. What is important to you? (kindness, family, friends, money, etc.)
- ⦿ Needs - What are the things you need to live as happily and independently as possible?

Gathering Information

- ⦿ It is important to think about where you get information and who you trust.
- ⦿ Friends or family
- ⦿ Experts like a doctor
- ⦿ Other people in your life like your support worker, hairdresser, teacher
- ⦿ People who had made the same choice before
- ⦿ Visit places (like a home, office, or school)?



Thinking About Past Experiences

- ⦿ It is useful to think about decisions you have made before
- ⦿ We learn from our mistakes and successes
- ⦿ You might need someone to help you remember what happened when you did this before?
- ⦿ You may need to consider doing something differently than you did before.



WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN?

Think about the best option for you now.

What would you really like to happen and why is that special to you?

- ⊙ When making a decision it is important to think about both the good and bad things that could happen so you can make the best choice.
- ⊙ We all take risks, but you need to take responsibility for the decisions you make.
- ⊙ Think about who else your decision affects. Not everyone may like your decision and you may have to explain why it is important to you.

What are the good things that could happen?

What are the bad things that could happen?

Make a list of pros (good things) and cons (bad things) and compare the two.

What are some reasons it might not work?

What can you do to offset the bad things?

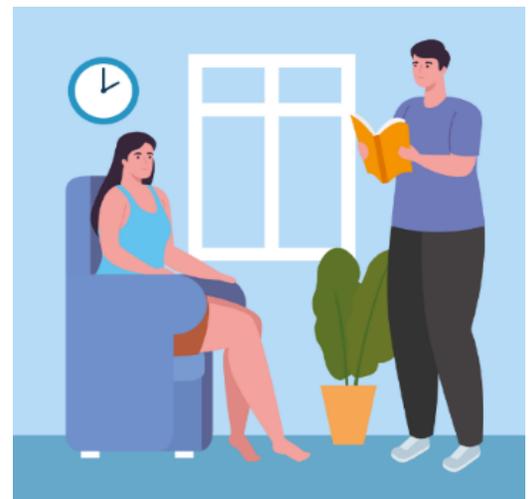
Sometimes, things do not work out. That is ok. We all learn from our good and bad decisions. If you make a bad decision, do not give up on your goal. Make a new plan!



TELL OTHERS YOUR DECISION!



- ✓ **Create an agreement with your supported team to get started on achieving your life goals.**
- ✓ **Depending on your situation, additional legal forms may need to be explored to help protect your money, health and your personal belongings.**
- ✓ **Documenting informal decisions is one way to demonstrate that someone is able to make decisions with support. It is important to document how the decision was made, what support was provided and what the decision is.**
- ✓ **Some things you might include when documenting a decision:**
 - ⊙ Who is making the decision
 - ⊙ Why the decision is being made
 - ⊙ Who is/ has supported them. How?
 - ⊙ Options considered
 - ⊙ Consequences considered
 - ⊙ Risks involved and safeguards
 - ⊙ Space for compromise/ bottom line
 - ⊙ Who else needs to know about the decision
 - ⊙ Who might be affected by the decision and how.





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