



Conversation Cards

Decision Supporter Guide





My Life My Choices Conversation Cards

Decision Supporter Guide

“Decisions are part of you and what you are doing. You make choices and decisions for yourself and sometimes all of us need to get some support for decision making.”

– Co-designer, Adelaide

Decisions can be small or big, easy or hard. This depends on the person who makes the decision, the decision that needs to be made and what else is happening in their life.

Everyone needs support to make decisions.

The support can be for long-term goals and everyday choices.

Support is about what people want, what people need and what people choose for their own life.

Supported decision making is important because it is about putting the person and their will and preference at the centre of decision making.

Why did we make conversation cards?

The conversation cards are designed to open up conversation between people with disability and their supporters about decision making.

“We all make decisions, but some people find that a lot harder than others. Because of that, some people take over without respecting the person.”

– Co-designer, Sydney

Every Decision Maker and each decision is different. The cards focus on strengths and self-leadership.

The cards help people with intellectual disability to think about decision making in their lives. They support learning about decision making, rights and opportunities while encouraging relationship building and open communication.

People can point to, hold and share the cards to express themselves, to promote two-way discussion, and to build their own views of decision making.

How were the conversation cards developed?

People with and without intellectual disability got together as a co-design team to look closely into decision making.

The freedom to make decisions feels good. It can be an exciting but also a difficult process. People with intellectual disability talked about how unhappy they felt when people took over their decisions and did not consult them.

The conversation cards were developed by the co-design team to assist Decision Makers and Decision Supporters to work together and communicate about decision making and have fun doing it.

My Life My Choices Conversation Cards

There are 6 sets of conversation cards in the box. Each set focuses on an area of decision making and support.

- Mystery Questions
- Feelings Cards
- Action Cards
- Decision Stories
- Coaching Cards
- Rights Cards

The card sets are designed to be used separately or together and can be used to suit individual situations. Each set includes a card with a brief guide on how to use them.

Where can the conversation cards be used?

The conversation cards can be used creatively and flexibly by people with disability and their supporters. They can be used one-on-one or with groups of people.

Some examples are:

- Education and training workshops
- Family and friends
- Support workers, service providers
- Peer groups
- Self-advocacy groups
- Circles of Support and Microboards
- Advocacy relationships
- Therapeutic relationships
- Individual reflection
- Others – get creative!

Mystery Questions

Some people are not used to talking about their long-term goals or everyday choices and preferences, so these cards are designed to build confidence and open discussion. Even if the Decision Maker and Decision Supporter know each other very well, they may be surprised by the answers.

Listen carefully to understand deeper interests and values that motivate the participants. People may learn they share values, or that they are quite different. Think about what this could mean when supporting a person to make decisions for themselves.

These questions can be a starting point for broader discussions.

Remember:

- Have fun
- Get to know each other better
- Practise saying what you like and don't like
- Understand what is important to each other
- Accept what people say about themselves without judging
- Be gently curious and help each other find ways to share more about yourselves

Feelings Cards

“It is hard to say what I want, or to say no to someone. We worry about hurting people’s feelings. This means we put up with things we don’t really want.”

– Co-design team member

The Feelings cards can help people to understand and find words for emotions they are experiencing. It can be easy for people with intellectual disability to be left out of some or all decision making.

Remember:

- Making decisions can bring up all kinds of feelings
- It is useful to recognise feelings and understand the reasons
- Feelings can be expressed through behaviour
- Accept what people say about their feelings without judging
- Explore ways to manage feelings so the person can be fully involved
- Recognise that what you feel can also affect the support you give

Action Cards

The Action cards offer practical ways to support people to make decisions.

Within relationships, it is important to find shared words for support actions that assist individual Decision Makers, and build their confidence and skills to direct support. Negotiations about who does which tasks of decision exploration, and when are also important.

The cards show ways individual needs can be supported, so people with intellectual disability can access and understand information that will help in decision making.

Remember:

- There are practical things you can do to support people to make decisions
- Build a shared language about decision making and support
- Decision Makers can learn to ask for the support they like and need
- Understand that you are continuously learning how to support decision making
- Sometimes it is not the right time for a person to make a decision and this is OK
- Explore why a person may want other people to make their decisions. Understand their preferences, and be alert to opportunities for growth and any change of mind

Decision Stories

The Decision Stories cards have decision making scenarios for discussion. Scenarios help people to respond to potential issues 'from a safe distance'. There are no right or wrong answers to the stories.

Discussions about the scenarios help people to:

- Interpret situations
- Think about supports
- Brainstorm options
- Talk about feelings
- Practise the best ways to communicate
- Problem solve

Remember:

- Put the values and strengths of Decision Makers at the centre of the discussion
- Think about your own values and possible bias when giving support
- Encourage discussion about advice that could be given to the characters in the scenarios
- Practise listening skills
- Ask curious questions
- Talk about potential consequences of actions

Coaching Cards

The Coaching cards support and encourage people with disability to be brave and recognise their own decision making power.

When a decision is complex, hard or drawn out, Decision Makers can feel like giving up.

These cards are a bit like having a coach on the side, to inspire people to keep reaching for their goals.

Rights Cards

Under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities everyone has the right to make decisions about their lives. This includes people with intellectual disability.

These cards help Decision Makers and supporters understand the rights that all people have. People with intellectual disability are often unaware of their rights and these cards provide information for discussion, with a particular focus on supported decision making.

Remember:

- Everyone has these rights but people with intellectual disability are often not aware of them
- These cards support discussions about rights
- An understanding of rights underpins decision making and decision making support



We hope you enjoy using these cards.



Council for
Intellectual Disability



www.cid.org.au

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South Australian Council
on **Intellectual** Disability

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My Life My Choices Conversation Cards



You can use these cards to:

- Help you say things that are hard to say
- Take the lead in making decisions
- Share how you feel with others
- Keep your relationships strong

It is ok to ask for help to use the cards.



There are six sets.

- Feelings Cards
- Action Cards
- Decision Stories
- Rights Cards
- Coaching Cards
- Mystery Questions

At the start of each set there is a card that shows you how to use the cards.





Feelings

Cards



How to use the cards

Feelings are a big part of making decisions.

- ➔ Look at the Feelings cards.
- ➔ They can help you think about how you feel.
- ➔ They can help you say how you feel.
- ➔ They can help you say what makes you feel this way.



Angry

I feel angry

People do not understand me.

People talk over me.

People do not listen to what I want.

What makes you feel angry?



Overwhelmed

I feel overwhelmed

There is too much information.

There are too many people around me.

The decision feels too big.

There is too much to think about.

**What makes you feel
overwhelmed?**



Scared

I feel scared

I am doing something new.

I might get into trouble.

People are telling me I have to do something.

What makes you feel scared?



Worried

I feel worried

I have to make a hard decision.

I do not want to get it wrong.

I do not know what will happen.

What makes you feel worried?



Left out

I feel left out

Other people are making decisions for me.

My voice is not being heard.

No one is giving me the information I need.

What makes you feel left out?



Bullied

I feel bullied

People are pushing me to do things.

I feel scared to say no.

I feel I have no power.

What makes you feel bullied?



Excited

I feel excited

I love to try new things.

I want to be in charge of my life.

I have started making my own decisions.

What makes you feel excited?



Hopeful

I feel hopeful

I feel good things will happen.

People support me to do my own things.

This is how I want my life to be.

What makes you feel hopeful?



Inspired

I feel inspired

I can do things in different ways.

I have new ideas for my life.

I can make the life I want.

What makes me feel inspired?



Ready

I feel ready

I have all the information I need.

I want to grow and get things done.

I want to move forward with my life.

What makes me feel ready?



Independent

I feel independent

I make my own choices now.

I get to have the final say.

I do life my way.

**What makes you feel
independent?**



Supported

I feel supported

I decide what happens.

I can share the stress with people.

I know who to ask for support.

What makes you feel supported?

I feel

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This is because

.....

.....

.....

.....

I feel

.....

This is because

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.....

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.....



Action Cards



How to use the cards

Look at the Action cards to help you:

- ➔ Take part in your choices and decisions.
- ➔ Be a strong Decision Maker.
- ➔ Lead your own life.
- ➔ Tell people around you what actions to take.



Give me time and space to make the best choice for me.

Here are some ideas

- Be patient.
- Do not rush me.
- Give me time to think.



Make information easy for me.

Here are some ideas

- Give me information in a way that works for me.
- Say it in a different way.
- Check I understand.



One decision at a time. All at once is too much for me.

Here are some ideas

- Help me know where to start.
- Break the decision into steps.



Give me breaks. Making decisions can be hard work.

Here are some ideas

- Giving me a break helps my mind to rest.
- A break helps me think about my feelings.



Help me deal with risk. Taking risks can help me grow.

Here are some ideas

- Talk about the good things first.
- Do not only talk about the bad things.
- Talk about how to make it safer.
- Work through risk with me.
- Let me have a go.



I need one Decision Supporter at a time.

Here are some ideas

- Too many people means I get left out.
- Support my voice to be heard.
- Help me tell other Decision Supporters what I want.

A **Decision Supporter** can be a family member, friend, peer, paid supporter or advocate.



Get to know me.

Here are some ideas

- Spend time with me.
- Find out what I like and do not like.
- Make it safe for me to share my story.
- Tell me about yourself so I can know you too.



Help me understand the options.

Here are some ideas

- Show me new ideas in a way I understand.
- Tell me stories of how it feels.
- Be a role model.
- Respect when I say no.



Break down the decision into parts.

Here are some ideas

- Help me see when a decision can be made.
- Support me to understand what it all means.
- Ask me questions. What information will help?
- Help me work out if it is a big or small decision.
- Help me plan.



Hear what I have to say.

Here are some ideas

- Do not talk over me.
- Find out how I use my voice.
- Check that you understand what I say.
- Remember it is about me not you.



Decision Stories



How to use the cards

Choose a story to read and think about these questions.

- ➔ What is the story about?
- ➔ Who is in the story?
- ➔ Who is the Decision Maker?
- ➔ What is the decision?
- ➔ What does the Decision Maker want to do?
- ➔ What is the Decision Maker feeling?
- ➔ Where can the Decision Maker get more information?
- ➔ How will the Decision Maker know what is best?



Millie has a new boyfriend.

They live far away from each other.

They want to see each other more.

But Millie's mum thinks they are just friends.

Mum does not know it is a love relationship.

What could Millie do next?



Nicole lives by herself in her own place.

She feels lonely.

Something needs to change.

She really likes animals.

Nicole would like to get a pet.

What could Nicole do next?



Aldo's doctor says Aldo needs tablets to help his heart.

Aldo is scared to take tablets.

He asks the doctor how the tablets will make him feel.

The doctor tells Aldo to just take them.

What could Aldo do next?



Asha and Mike are in love.

They have been together for 3 years and want to get married.

Asha's dad tells her people with a disability should not get married.

What could Asha and Mike do next?



Sam walks to the shops on Monday.

Sometimes there are bullies at the shops.

They say rude things and tell Sam to give them money.

Sam feels scared and gives them money.

The bullies say to Sam do not tell anyone.

What could Sam do next?



Michelle does many things;

- she studies at TAFE
- she has a part time job at the coffee van
- she looks after her home

Michelle starts to feel like it is too much.

What could Michelle do next?



Charlie works at a factory.

It is the same thing every day.

Charlie wonders what other jobs are like.

His brother David works in an office.

Charlie would like to try an office job.

What could Charlie do next?



Every year Anika goes on holiday.

She goes to the city with her family.

Her friends go to different places.

Anika thinks going to different places sounds fun.

What could Anika do next?



Peter lives in Adelaide with his mum.

He has a job and good friends.

Peter's father asks him to come live in Sydney with him.

Peter wants a change but feels scared.

What could Peter do next?



Rights Cards



We all have human rights.

Human rights mean that all people should be treated fairly.

You have the **right to make decisions** and the **right to get support to make decisions**.

You can use these cards to

- ➔ Know your rights
- ➔ Tell others about your rights
- ➔ Help you take action



I have the right to make my own decisions.

Every person with a disability has the right to make decisions for their life.

- I am the Decision Maker.
- It is my life, I live with the decisions I make.
- Decisions mean more independence for me.
- You are the Decision Supporter.
- Give me good support.
- Believe that I can make decisions for myself.



I have the right to information I can understand.

Information helps me to think about and understand what the decision means.

- I deserve to have enough information.
- I have the right to get information in a way that I understand.
- I need pictures and words.
- When I understand, I can make a better decision.



I have the right to make decisions in private.

I have the right to make decisions in private.

- My decisions are my own.
- I decide who knows about my decisions.
- I choose who I do and do not trust.
- I can make decisions about my life without going to others.
- I can keep things to myself if I choose.



I have the right to learn how to make decisions.

Decisions can be big or small, hard or easy.

- I can learn to make decisions.
- I can learn to make big decisions over time.
- I can learn to change my mind.
- I can learn to take risks.
- I can make mistakes and grow as a person.



I have the right to get support for decisions.

Support for decisions can be:

- Close people like family, friends and peers
- Paid supporters
- Tools to help me say what I want
- Information that helps me understand risks when I make decisions
- Other supports that give me what I need



I have the right to choose my Decision Supporters.

My Decision Supporters should:

- Be people I trust
- Listen to me
- Get along well with me
- Help me work out what I want for my life
- Help me tell others what I want
- Give me information in a way I can understand
- Help me to make my decisions happen



I have the right to respect for who I am and what I want.

- It should always be the last choice to have someone make decisions for me.
- Any decisions must respect my everyday choices and what I want for my life.
- I am equal with you, I am not less than you. I reach my goals just like everyone else.
- I feel important when I get respect, everything feels right.



I have the right to feel safe in all parts of my life.

I have the right to be safe from:

- People who try to change my decisions
- People who do not respect my rights
- People who only think about what they want
- People who harm me or bully me



I have the right to be treated fairly.

Fairly means I feel part of my community, part of life.

- If I have a disability I should have the right support to feel equal.
- I am a human and I have the same rights as you.
- It is my right to make decisions for my life.
- You are not the boss of me. I am the boss of me.



Coaching

Cards



How to use the cards

- ➔ You can use these cards by yourself.
- ➔ They can help you feel good about decision making.
- ➔ You can use them to support your peers.
- ➔ You can use them to tell your Decision Supporter how you feel and what you want to do.
- ➔ Read the card and talk about what it says.





I can try new things.





I can change my mind.





I can trust my heart and gut.





I can ask for support.





I can speak up about how I feel.





I can live my life my way.





I can celebrate the small steps.





I can make my own choices.





I believe in me.



Mystery Questions



How to use the cards

Use these cards with 2 or more people.

- ➔ Put the cards on the table, picture down.
- ➔ Choose a card and read it out loud.
- ➔ It is OK to get help.
- ➔ Answer the question then ask each person to answer.
- ➔ Take turns to choose a card and share.
- ➔ You can pass if you want to.

Have fun!





What superpower would you choose?





If you were Prime Minister what would you do for a day?





What is your favourite thing to do with friends or family?





What is something new you would like to try?





What is your favourite thing to do at home?





When do you feel you are in charge?





What is your favourite place to visit?





When do you feel included?





What is something that makes you smile?