



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.**



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Intellectual Disability



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