

The background of the slide features a series of colorful silhouettes of people with various disabilities. Some individuals are standing, while others are using wheelchairs or crutches. The silhouettes are rendered in a variety of colors including green, red, blue, orange, and purple, creating a vibrant and inclusive visual. The text is overlaid on this background.

# Empowering People with Disabilities

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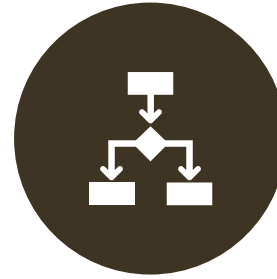
THROUGH DECISION-MAKING

# Key Topics

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Advocacy



Decision-Making  
Process



LifeCourse Tools



Empowerment



**Advocacy = Empowerment**

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# Definitions

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## Advocacy

- ❑ Raise awareness to the **RIGHTS** and **NEEDS** of individuals with disabilities. Challenge **DISCRIMINATION** and secure **EQUAL** opportunities promoting **INCLUSION**.

## Empowerment

- ❑ Refers to the process of **ENABLING** individuals to exercise control over their lives, **MAKE CHOICES**, and **PARTICIPATE** actively in decision-making that affects them. It emphasizes **AUTONOMY**, **SELF-DETERMINATION**, and building **SELF-CONFIDENCE**.

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## Supported Decision-Making

- ❑ Supported decision-making is an approach that **RECOGNIZES** and **RESPECTS** the **AUTONOMY** and **LEGAL CAPACITY OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES**. It involves providing the **NECESSARY SUPPORT** and **ACCOMMODATIONS** for **THEM** to make **DECISIONS** and have those **DECISIONS HONORED**.
- ❑ Instead of making decisions on behalf of individuals with disabilities, supported decision-making focuses on **EMPOWERING THEM** to **EXPRESS** their **PREFERENCES, UNDERSTAND INFORMATION**, and make **INFORMED CHOICES**.



# Supported Decision-Making

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# QUESTIONS THAT PROMOTES AUTONOMY

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Can you tell me about the decisions you feel comfortable making on your own?

What sort of decisions do you find challenging?

In what areas would you like to have more autonomy or control?

Who in your life do you trust to help you with decision-making?

How do you prefer to receive information? For example, do you prefer it verbally, written, or through visual aids?

Can you tell me about a time when you made a decision that you felt good about?

What are some strategies that have helped you in making decisions in the past?

How do you feel when you make decisions? Is there anything that makes you anxious or uncertain?

Are there any immediate decisions you're facing where you'd like support?

What are your goals? How do you think we can make decisions that will help you achieve them?

How can I best assist you during this decision-making process?

Would you like me to explain any options or possible outcomes more clearly?

Do you need more time to think about your decision?

# Supporting Decision-Making through the Trajectory

1. Establish a clear vision
2. Identify short-term and long-term goals
3. Assess current resources and limitations
4. Develop a plan
5. Seek support and collaborate
6. Regularly review and adjust the trajectory
7. Build decision-making skills
8. Monitor and celebrate achievements

The worksheet is titled "LIFE TRAJECTORY | SUPPORTED DECISION-MAKING" and is divided into four main sections, each with a header and a large yellow box for notes.

- Past Life Experiences** (Header in a light blue box):
  - What helps me UNDERSTAND the issues and my options?
  - What has helped me COMMUNICATE my preferences, choices, and decisions?
  - What has helped me FOLLOW THROUGH on my choices and decisions?
  - What were past barriers that made it hard for me to understand, communicate, or follow through with my choices and decisions?
- Moving Forward** (Header in a light blue box):
  - What do I need now to help me UNDERSTAND the issues and my options?
  - What do I need now to help me COMMUNICATE my preferences, choices, and decisions?
  - What do I need to help me FOLLOW THROUGH on my choices and decisions?
  - What needs to happen to avoid barriers that make it hard for me to understand, communicate, or follow through with my choices and decisions?
- Vision for What I Want** (Header in a purple box):
  - What decisions and choices do I want to make myself or with help from my supporters?
  - My vision for a good life
- What I Don't Want** (Header in a red box):
  - What decisions and choices do I NOT want someone else making for me or without my input or approval?
  - Not a good life

Arrows indicate a flow from "Past Life Experiences" to "Moving Forward", and from "Moving Forward" to "Vision for What I Want". There are also arrows pointing from the bottom of the "Past Life Experiences" and "Moving Forward" sections towards the "What I Don't Want" section.

At the bottom left, there are icons for social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn) and a small logo. At the bottom right, there is a footer: "Developed by the Charting the LifeCourse Nexus - LifeCourseTools.com © 2020 Curators of the University of Missouri | UMRIC 140-UCEDD | August 2020".



# QUESTIONS TO SUPPORT THE AUTONOMY

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Am I approaching this person with respect and recognizing their right to make decisions?

How can I ensure that I am providing an environment that promotes autonomy and self-determination?

Am I actively listening to the person's thoughts and preferences without imposing my own biases or assumptions?

What are the person's strengths and abilities that can be utilized in the decision-making process?

How can I adapt my communication style to best meet the person's needs and preferences?

Am I providing information in a clear and accessible manner?

How can I support the person in identifying and understanding the available options?

Am I empowering the person to weigh the pros and cons of each option?

What strategies can I use to help the person anticipate and evaluate the potential outcomes of their decisions?

How can I encourage the person to express their emotions and concerns related to the decision?

Am I fostering a non-judgmental and supportive environment where the person feels safe to express their thoughts and opinions?

How can I help the person develop decision-making skills and confidence over time?


Am I aware of any cultural or personal factors that may influence the person's decision-making process?

How can I collaborate with the person's support network, such as family members or healthcare professionals, while ensuring the person's autonomy is respected?

How can I adapt my approach if the person's decision-making capacity changes over time?

# Best Practices Assisting in the Exploration of Decision-Making

- ❑ **Foster a person-centered approach:** Ensure that the decision-making process is centered around the individual with disabilities. Respect their autonomy, preferences, and values. Facilitate their active participation and empower them to make informed choices based on their unique needs and desires.
- ❑ **Provide accessible and inclusive tools:** Use decision-making support tools that are accessible and inclusive for the individual with disabilities. Consider their specific needs, such as providing alternative formats (e.g., large print, braille, or audio) for individuals with visual impairments or using assistive technologies for those with communication challenges.
- ❑ **Simplify complex information:** Break down complex information into simpler terms and concepts that are easier for the individual to understand. Use clear and concise language, visual aids, or other communication strategies to enhance comprehension. Ensure that the person has access to all the necessary information to make well-informed decisions.
- ❑ **Support information gathering:** Help the person gather relevant information related to the decision they are making. Assist them in researching various options, exploring different perspectives, and considering the potential advantages and disadvantages of each choice. Encourage them to consult reliable sources, seek expert advice, or involve their support network as needed.




CHARTING the LifeCourse 

### Tool for Exploring Decision Making Supports

This tool was designed to assist individuals and supporters with exploring decision making support needs for each life domain.

Name of Individual: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of person completing this form: \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to individual (circle one): Self Family Friend Guardian Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
How long have you known the individual? \_\_\_\_\_






For each question below, mark the level of support you need when making and communicating decisions and choices in the Charting the LifeCourse life domains.

	 I can decide with no extra support	 I need support with my decision	 I need someone to decide for me
<b>DAILY LIFE &amp; EMPLOYMENT</b>			
Can I decide if or where I want to work?			
Can I look for and find a job (read ads, apply, use personal contacts)?			
Do I plan what my day will look like?			
Do I decide if I want to learn something new and how to best go about that?			
Can I make big decisions about money? (open bank account, make big purchases)			
Do I make everyday purchases? (food, personal items, recreation)			
Do I pay my bills on time (rent, cell, electric, internet)			
Do I keep a budget so I know how much money I have to spend?			
Am I able to manage the eligibility benefits I receive?			
Do I make sure no one is taking my money or using it for themselves?			
<b>HEALTHY LIVING</b>			
Do I choose when to go to the doctor or dentist?			
Do I decide/direct what doctors, medical/health clinics, hospitals, specialists or other health care providers I use?			
Can I make health/medical choices for my day-to-day well-being? (check-ups, routine screening, working out, vitamins)			
Can I make medical choices in serious situations? (surgery, big injury)			
Can I make medical choices in an emergency?			
Can I take medications as directed or follow a prescribed diet?			
Do I know the reasons why I take my medication?			
Do I understand the consequences if I refuse medical treatment?			
Can I alert others and seek medical help for serious health problems?			
Do I make choices about birth control or pregnancy?			
Do I make choices about drugs or alcohol?			
Do I understand health consequences associated with choosing high risk behaviors (substance abuse, overeating, high-risk sexual activities, etc.)?			
Do I decide where, when, and what to eat?			
Do I understand the need for personal hygiene and dental care?			

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# Best Practices Assisting in the Exploration of Decision-Making






- ❑ **Facilitate risk assessment and problem-solving:** Guide the individual in assessing the potential risks and challenges associated with each decision. Help them identify potential obstacles and develop strategies to mitigate or overcome them. Encourage critical thinking and problem-solving skills to evaluate the feasibility and consequences of different options.
- ❑ **Encourage self-reflection and self-advocacy:** Promote self-reflection by encouraging the individual to consider their personal strengths, values, and long-term goals when making decisions. Support them in expressing their preferences and advocating for their needs and rights. Help build their self-confidence and assertiveness in decision-making processes.
- ❑ **Provide emotional support:** Decision-making can sometimes be stressful or overwhelming, especially for individuals with disabilities who may face unique challenges. Offer emotional support throughout the process, actively listen to their concerns, and validate their feelings. Create a safe and supportive environment where they feel comfortable discussing their thoughts and emotions.
- ❑ **Respect the individual's decisions:** Ultimately, respect the individual's right to make their own decisions, even if their choices differ from what you might have advised. Recognize that they are the experts in their own lives and have the right to determine their own path. Support and assist them in implementing their decisions and provide ongoing support as needed.

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# Support Areas for a Successful Decision-Making Plan

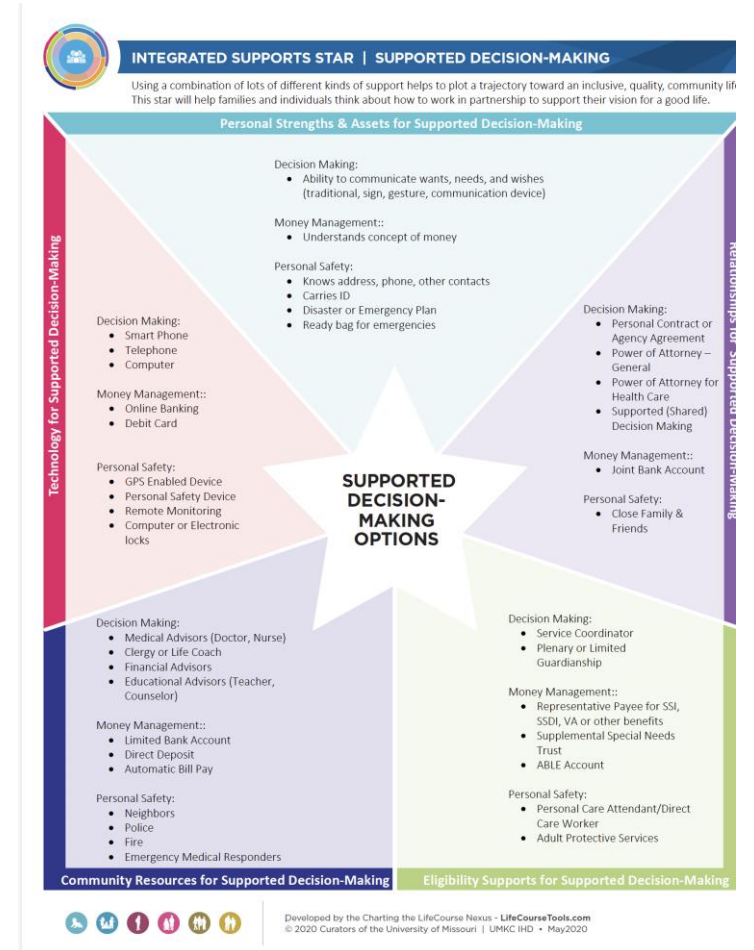
Personal Strengths

Relationships

Specific Eligibility Services

Community Resources

Technology







Decision-Making | Empowerment

# The Results

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- ❑ **Self-Advocacy:** By combining advocacy and empowerment, individuals with disabilities can develop self-advocacy skills, such as understanding their rights, effectively communicating their needs, and participating in decision-making processes. This enhances their ability to express their desires and make decisions that align with their values.
- ❑ **Inclusion and Equality:** Advocacy efforts aim to eliminate barriers and promote inclusion, while empowerment fosters equality by ensuring that individuals with disabilities have equal opportunities to participate in decisions that affect their lives. Supported decision-making reinforces these principles by providing the necessary accommodations for individuals to exercise their legal capacity.
- ❑ **Personalized Decision-Making:** Through advocacy and empowerment, families and individuals with disabilities can access the support and resources needed to make informed decisions tailored to their specific circumstances. This approach recognizes that individuals are the experts of their own lives and ensures that their decisions are respected.
- ❑ **Enhanced Well-being:** When individuals with disabilities are actively involved in decision-making processes, their sense of self-worth, autonomy, and dignity is strengthened. This, in turn, can lead to improved overall well-being, mental health, and life satisfaction.
- ❑ **Systemic Change:** By advocating for supported decision-making practices and empowering individuals with disabilities to exercise their legal capacity, advocacy efforts can contribute to broader systemic changes. These changes may include legal reforms, policy developments, and the creation of inclusive practices and environments that benefit not only individuals with disabilities but society.

# Key Takeaways

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**Inclusive Approach**

**Diverse Support Options**

**Universal Application**

Thank  
you!