

# Ottawa Personal Decision Guide

For People Facing Tough Health or Social Decisions

You will be guided through four steps: **1** **2** **3** **4**



## 1 Clarify your decision.

What decision do you face?

What is your reason for making this decision?

When do you need to make a choice?

How far along are you with making a choice? Not yet thought about the options Close to making a choice  
Thinking about the options Already made a choice

## 2 Explore your decision.



### Knowledge

List the options and main benefits and risks you already know.



### Values

Use stars (★) to show how much each benefit and risk matters to you. 5 stars means that it matters “a lot”. No stars means “not at all”.



### Certainty

Consider the option with the benefits that matter most to you and are most likely to happen. Avoid the options with the risks that matter most to you.

|           | Reasons to Choose this Option<br>(Benefits / Advantages / Pros) | How much it matters<br>Use 0 to 5 ★s | Reasons to Avoid this Option<br>(Risks / Disadvantages / Cons) | How much it matters<br>Use 0 to 5 ★s |
|-----------|---|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Option #1 |   |                                      |  |                                      |
| Option #2 |   |                                      |  |                                      |
| Option #3 |   |                                      |  |                                      |

Which option do you prefer? #1 #2 #3 Unsure



### Support

|   |  |    |     |    |
|---|--|----|-----|----|
| Who else is involved?                         |  |    |     |    |
| Which option do they prefer?                  |  |    |     |    |
| Is this person pressuring you?                | Yes  | No | Yes | No |
| How can they support you?                     |  |    |     |    |
| What role do you prefer in making the choice? | Share the decision with...<br>Decide myself after hearing views of...<br>Someone else decides... |    |     |    |
| Who?  |  |    |     |    |

### 3 Identify your decision making needs.



#### Knowledge

Do you know the benefits and risks of each option?

Yes

No



#### Values

Are you clear about which benefits and risks matter most to you?

Yes

No



#### Support

Do you have enough support and advice to make a choice?

Yes

No



#### Certainty

Do you feel sure about the best choice for you?

Yes

No

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People who answer "No" to one or more of these questions are more likely to delay their decision, change their mind, feel regret about their choice or blame others for bad outcomes. Therefore, it is important to work through steps two 2 and four 4 that focus on your needs.

### 4 Plan the next steps based on your needs.

#### Decision making needs

#### ✓ Things you would like to try



#### Knowledge

If you feel you do NOT have enough facts

Find out more about the options and the chances of the benefits and risks.  
List your questions.  
List where to find the answers (e.g. library, health professionals, counsellors):



#### Values

If you are NOT sure which benefits and risks matter most to you

Review the stars in the balance scale to see what matters most to you.  
Find people who know what it is like to experience the benefits and risks.  
Talk to others who have made the decision.  
Read stories of what mattered most to others.  
Discuss with others what mattered most to you.



#### Support

If you feel you do NOT have enough support

Discuss your options with a trusted person (e.g. health professional, counsellor, family, friends).  
Find help to support your choice (e.g. funds, transport, child care).

If you feel PRESSURE from others to make a specific choice

Focus on the opinions of others who matter most.  
Share your guide with others.  
Ask others to complete this guide. Find areas of agreement. When you disagree on facts, agree to get information. When you disagree on what matters most, consider the other person's opinion. Take turns to listen to what the other person says matters most to them.  
Find a neutral person to help you and others involved.

Other factors making the decision DIFFICULT

List anything else you need: