

Ottawa Family Decision Guide

For Families Facing Tough Health or Social Decisions



1 Clarify the 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?

Have not thought about the options
Thinking about the options

Close to making a choice
Already made a choice

2 Explore the 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 (Benefits / Advantages / Pros)	How much it matters Use 0 to 5 ★s		Reasons to avoid this option (Risks / Disadvantages / Cons)	How much it matters Use 0 to 5 ★s	
Option #1						
Option #2						
Option #3						

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



Support

Who else is involved?	Option you think this person prefers? #1 #2 #3 Unsure	Option you think this person prefers? #1 #2 #3 Unsure
What role do you prefer in making the choice?	Share the decision with... Decide myself after hearing views of... Someone else decides...	Share the decision with... Decide myself after hearing views of... Someone else decides...
Who?		

3 Identify decision making needs.

	Knowledge	Do you know the benefits and risks of each option?	Yes	No	Yes	No
	Values	Are you clear about which benefits and risks matter most to you?	Yes	No	Yes	No
	Support	Do you have enough support and advice to make a choice?	Yes	No	Yes	No
		Are you choosing without pressure from others?	Yes	No	Yes	No
	Certainty	Do you feel sure about the best choice for you?	Yes	No	Yes	No

Adapted from The SURE Test © 2008 O'Connor, Légaré.

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 their needs.

4 Plan the next steps based on 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 benefits and risks.
List your questions.
Note 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's 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 matters 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 another person involved to complete this guide. Find areas of agreement. When you disagree on facts, agree to get more 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 in the decision.

Other factors making the decision DIFFICULT

List anything else you need: