**Department of Human Services Victoria**

**Disability Services, Supported Decision Making**

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| **Approach** | Principles-based approach:   1. Everyone has the right to make decisions about the things that affect them 2. Capacity to make decisions must be assumed 3. Every effort should be made to support people to make their decisions 4. Capacity is decision specific 5. People have the right to learn from experience 6. People have the right to change their minds 7. People have the right to make decisions others might not agree with |
| **Considerations** | Types of decisions: day to day, lifestyle & recreation, employment & education, living arrangements, access to services, healthcare & medical, financial and legal. Choice is not unlimited.  The timing – people have a time of day that they are at their best  The complexity – may require more information, different format, more time  The urgency – some are more urgent than others, explain there is a timeframe & consequences if they don’t make a decision  The currency – how a person likes to approach planning, well planned versus spontaneous  The availability of the information  The physical environment – being in noisy or busy environment can affect a person’s concentration, is the person less anxious in other places?  The sensitivity of the decision  Personal issues faced by the person – ill health, medication or stress can impede clear decision-making.  Legal capacity is a different issue; it is linked to whether a person understands the significance of their actions. |
| **Challenges** | The perception of others that too much time & effort might be required to involve them in the decision making process.  Managing the risk and possible consequences.  People have had limited opportunities to make decisions for themselves and supporters may feel anxious about them making ‘wrong’ decisions.  Differences of opinion between the person and their supporters. |
| **What does this teach us?** | Get to know the person & understand their communication method.  Get to know the important people in a person’s life.  Understand the context & the circumstances (which can change).  We must assume capacity. Consider capacity as decision specific. Capacity can change.  All supported decision making options must be explored before engaging in substitute decision making.  It’s ok to try things out. Give people the right information in the right format with the right amount of time.  It’s important to understand a person’s values and attitudes and respect them even if they differ from the supporter. |