

Talk About It!

Shared decision making communication skills for providers and helpers

Shared decision making is more than asking someone what is important to him or her. Combining these communication skills with information resources, structured decision aids, and decision support tools can result in a productive and satisfying shared decision making experience. It also empowers individuals and encourages their involvement.

Skill	Example Conversation Starter
BEFORE decision making	
1. Recognize that a need exists and/or that a decision can be made.	This is a situation where you can think about what is important to you and make a decision.
2. State there is more than one way to deal with the need.	There may be several options for you to deal with this situation.
3. Identify ideas and expectations.	What are your ideas for dealing with this situation?
4. Discuss concerns and worries about the decision.	What worries you most about making this decision?
5. Find out how the person wants YOU involved in the decision.	Is this a decision you want to make by yourself or do you want some help from me? From someone else? You said you wanted some help from me. Let's talk about what would be most useful.
6. Find out how the person wants OTHERS involved in the decision.	Do you want friends or family to help you think about or make this decision? If so, who? How do you want them involved?
DURING decision making	
7. Respect the person's pace and preferences for your involvement.	You said you wanted to make this decision yourself. Let me know if and how I can help. I'd like to check in to see how it's going. Is that OK?
8. Find out how the person prefers to receive information.	How do you want to get information about this? Talk it over with me or someone else? Read? Watch a video? Use the Internet?
9. Check to see if the person understands information.	Let's talk about what you found out from [our conversation, your reading, the video....]
10. Clarify steps and use tools to help make a decision.	Let's work through this together, step-by-step. OR here is a step-by-step worksheet to help guide you.
11. Identify options.	Let's make a list of all the possible ways to handle this situation.
12. Explore pros and cons of each option.	What would happen if you chose this option?
13. Offer opportunities for asking questions.	What questions do you have?
14. Indicate the need to decide or defer a decision.	It's time to make a decision about what should be done. OR you don't have to decide right now. You can think it over for a while.
AFTER decision making	
15. Revisit and review the decision.	You made a decision to..... How did that go for you?