Support for Decision Making consultation submission

**Name:** Melbourne East Disability Advocacy (MEDA) (VIC)

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# How can we help people with disability make decisions for themselves?

* Resources: Yes
* Information: No
* Decision Guides: Yes
* Having a person help: Yes
* Other: Yes

A significant change in culture, knowledge and experience of the principles and practices of supported decision making

# Who are the best people to help you (or a person with a disability) to make decisions?

* Family: Yes
* Friends: Yes
* Peer Support Networks: Yes
* Mentors: Yes
* Coordinators: No
* LAC: No
* NDIA Partners: No
* Advocates: No
* Service Providers: Yes
* Other: Yes

People who are well known to the individual, whom there is a trusted relationship and no conflict of interest. People who are part of or who could be part of the person's circle of support. Advocates could possibly be included if they are well known to the individual or Volunteer Citizen Advocates could be included if this has been an enduring relationshoip

# What should they do to help with decision-making?

Have the knowledge, understanding and experience in fostering the principles, support and practice of supported decision making

# How can they get better at helping?

* Getting to know the participant well: Yes
* Doing some training on decision support: Yes
* By having resources and information about providing decision support: Yes
* Other: Yes

Again a change of culture that values particularly people with cognitive disabilities capacity to be a part of decisions. Maybe role modelling, best practice examples and importantly everyone having the opportunity to have their communication assessed and supported

# How can we make sure the right people are helping?

* They are chosen by the NDIS Participant as a decision supporter: Yes
* They value the rights of people to make decisions with support: Yes
* They are a registered provider: No
* They enable the participant to take risks: Yes
* Other: Yes

This is one of the most challenging areas as some form of accountability needs to be in place. Could they be accountable to independent advocacy organisations where these organisations are funded to develop, build the capacity and ensure that they meet the expectations and requirements of a supported decision maker.

# What should decision supporters know about so they can better help people with disability make decisions?

* Guidelines for decision supporters: Yes
* Scenarios or Examples: No
* Information Sessions: No
* Support Networks: Yes
* Other: Yes

They should be committed to the United Nations Convention on the rights of people with disability. They should know about and be committed to supported decision making principles and practices. They should not have any power or influence over an individual where the individual feels neutrality is not adhered to.

# Can you tell us about a time when someone helped you (or a person with disability) to make a big decision?

Yes

## What worked well?

A belief that someone with disability can be a part of decisions. Knowledge of the individuals best communication. Trust and rapport and an ability to engage. Time to explore options or choices and an ability to foster decision making and recognition that decisions may come about due to experience and not just through conversation alone

## What could have been better?

People to have increased investment and time available to support in decision making. To further invest and support circles of support as a valid approach to building capacity for supported decision making

# What is the best way to support people with disability to make decisions about their NDIS plan?

* Practice: Yes
* Peer Support Networks: Yes
* Information and Resources: No
* Guidance Tools: Yes
* Not Sure: No
* Other: Yes

Change of culture in NDIA. A significant change where the draft plan is seen by the participant before being approved. A change of NDIA agenda that a plan meeting is not a cost saving exercise or agenda. A committment to choice and control and recognising someone's will and preference

# Are there different things to consider for people with different disabilities or cultural backgrounds?

**An intellectual disability:** Yes, All of the above reflections and considerations to be included here. A belief that people with ID can contribute to their decisions. "Nothing about me without me". To always develop new initiatives with a committment to co-design involving people with ID to contribute to the model

**A disability that impacts how they think, a cognitive impairment:** No

**A psychosocial disability:** No

**A disability that impacts their ability to communicate:** Yes, Absolutely critical element. If people are not afforded the respect to explore the most useful tools or approaches to communication then those around will lean on substitute decision making

**From a CALD community:** No

**From an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Community:** No

**From the LGBTIQA community:** No

# How can we help reduce conflict of interest?

I believe that conflict of interest can also exist when family members influence or don't respect or consider another family members decision or perspective because they also have something to gain. Reduction of conflict of interest could be addressed by independent advocates having some oversight or safeguarding but this cannot be done in the current climate of demand of advocacy organisations

# How can we help reduce undue influence?

Accountability to the role of a supported decision maker, there are safeguards in place monitoring these positions / persons how they are appointed, maintained or operate. This also needs to be called out as abuse and responded with this in mind

# What are your concerns (if any) around people with disability being more involved in making decisions for themselves?

Concerns about the wrong people, organisations engaged as supported decision makers and their possible motivation.

I applaud and support increasing people with disability increased involvement in decision making. Let's do this also from the top. Have more people with disability (including cognitive) involved in the higher level decision making arena of NDIA

# What else could we do to help people with disability to make decisions for themselves? Is there anything missing?

Resource this well. Change of culture. I believe that advocacy organisations have a role to play and experience and the right culture but engagement of these organisations needs to be with additional resourcing

# Do you have any feedback on our proposed actions in Appendix C of the paper?

No response recorded