Ottawa Personal Decision Guide For People Facing Tough Health or Social Decisions

You will be guided through four steps:
1. Clarify the decision.
2. Identify your decision making needs.
3. Explore your needs.
4. Plan the next steps.

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?
Are you leaning toward one option?

2. Identify your decision making needs.

Support
Do you have enough support and advice from others to make a choice? 
Are you choosing without pressure from others?

Knowledge
Do you know which options are available to you?
Do you know both the benefits and risks of each option?

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

Certainty
Do you feel sure about the best choice for you?

People who answer "No" to one or several 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 three and four that focus on your needs.

3. Explore your needs.

Support

Who else is involved?
Name:
Name:
Name:

Which option does this person prefer?

Is this person pressuring you?

How can this person support you?

What role do you prefer in making your choice?

Decisional Conflict Scale © 2006 O'Connor
In the balance scale below, list the options and main benefits and risks you already know. Underline the benefits and risks that you think are most likely to happen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option #1</th>
<th>Reasons to choose this option</th>
<th>How much it matters</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Option #2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Option #3</td>
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Knowledge:
- Reasons to choose this option
- How much it matters

Values:
- Add ★ to
- Reasons to avoid this option
- How much it matters

Certainty:
- Circle the option with the benefits that matter most to you and are most likely to happen. Avoid the option with the risks that are most important to avoid.

Plan the next steps based on your needs.

**Support**

- You feel you do NOT have enough support
  - Discuss your options with a trusted person (e.g. health professional, counsellor, family, friends)
  - Find out what help is on hand to support your choice (e.g. funds, transport, child care)

- 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, respect the other’s opinion. Take turns to listen, mirror back what the other has said matters most to him or her.
  - Find a neutral person to help you and others involved.

**Knowledge**

- You feel you do NOT have enough facts
  - Find out about the chances of benefits and risks.
  - List your questions and note where to find the answers (e.g. library, health professionals, counsellors):

**Values**

- 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.

- Other factors making the decision DIFFICULT
  - List anything else you need: