

Ottawa Personal Decision Guide

For People Making Health or Social Decisions



1 Clarify your decision.

What decision do you face?

What are your reasons for making this decision?

When do you need to make a choice?

How far along are you with making a choice?

Not thought about it
Thinking about it

Close to choosing
Made a choice

2 Explore your decision.



Knowledge

List the options and benefits and risks you know.



Values

Rate each benefit and risk using stars (★) to show how much each one matters to you.



Certainty

Choose the option with the benefits that matter most to you. Avoid the options with the risks that matter most to you.

	Reasons to Choose this Option Benefits / Advantages / Pros	How much it matters to you: 0★ not at all 5★ a great deal	Reasons to Avoid this Option Risks / Disadvantages / Cons	How much it matters to you: 0★ not at all 5★ a great deal
Option #1				
Option #2				
Option #3				

Which option do you prefer?

Option #1

Option #2

Option #3

Unsure



Support

Who else is involved?

Which option do they prefer?

Is this person pressuring you?

Yes

No

Yes

No

Yes

No

How can they support you?

What role do you prefer in making the choice?

Share the decision with...

Decide myself after hearing views of...

Someone else decides...

3 Identify your decision making needs.

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

	Knowledge	Do you know the benefits and risks of each option?	Yes	No
	Values	Are you clear about which benefits and risks matter most to you?	Yes	No
	Support	Do you have enough support and advice to make a choice?	Yes	No
	Certainty	Do you feel sure about the best choice for you?	Yes	No

If you answer 'no' to any question, you can work through steps two 2 and four 4, focusing on your needs.

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.

4 Plan the next steps based on your needs.

Decision making needs

✓ Things you could try

 **Knowledge**
If you feel you do NOT have enough facts

Find out more about the options and the chances of the benefits and risks.
List your questions.
List 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 step two 2 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 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 views of others who matter most.
Share your guide with others.
Ask others to fill in this guide. (See where you agree. If you disagree on facts, get more information. If you disagree on what matters most, consider the other person's views. Take turns to listen to what the other person says matters most to them.)
Find a person to help you and others involved.

 **Certainty**
If you feel UNSURE about the best choice for you

Work through steps two 2 and four 4, focusing on your needs.

Other factors making the decision DIFFICULT

List anything else you could try: