



A Collaborative Approach for Improved Outcomes

Informed Decision Making Trainer's Manual



This manual is designed to guide the trainer through the instructional video **How to Support Informed Decision Making.**

The video asks questions throughout the various scenes and the video should be paused when indicated to encourage discussion and clarify learning points. You can use your discretion to pause the video at any time if needed. Included in the manual are additional probing questions, suggestions to review scenes again and optional exercises that can be used. The trainer should be prepared for the audience to take the situations presented in a different direction depending on their experience and the people they support. Other probing questions can be asked to assist in the learning process.

The video and Trainer's Manual are designed to take you step by step through the training. The training can be provided in one session or it can be broken up into shorter segments.

Handouts:

- NADSP Code of Ethics
- Informed Decision Making Process
- Informed Decision Making Process – blank steps

Introduction

Scene #1 – Keith & Monte at the Mall.

Scene #2 – Glenn & Claude – Should I quit my job?

Scene #3 – Clarabel & Kristen – Which pants does she want?

Scene #4 – Mike & Jordan – I want to be a fireman.

Scene #5 – Ivan – Exploring Community Options.

Scene #6 – Bonnie & Shaunda – Why can't I see my friend?

Scene #7 – What's for dinner?

How to Support Informed Decision Making

Introduction to Training

❖ Hand out NADSP Code of Ethics

Say:

This instructional video demonstrates how to support people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities to make informed decisions; it encourages the empowerment of people with I/DD and dissuades support staff from making unilateral decisions for people who have disabilities.

You will see scenes of people who require differing amounts of support. Before starting the video, we offer a few questions that will define our purpose and set the stage.

Ask: What is informed decision making? Is it the same as self-determination? Is it the same as self-directed services? Let's have a brief discussion of these terms.

- Possible responses may include:
 - Self-determination is a broad term applying to any and every citizen having the control over all aspects of his or her life and exercising the rights of citizenship, freedom, and the pursuit of happiness.
 - Informed decision-making applies to any person exercising self-determination to make the best decision possible with adequate information within the context of life's varied circumstances. Sometimes a person requires assistance in assembling and sorting through the information that is entailed in making certain decisions. At other times, a person can manage the process by himself or herself.
 - Self-directed services and supports for persons with I/DD are an aspect of the self-determination philosophy. Self-direction, a value and not a program, generally refers to a wide range of approaches designed to maximize choice and control over hiring and supervising staff, taking control over a budget and choosing a productive direction in one's life.

Ask: Have you ever made a decision in your life where you did not have enough information? What did you do? Can someone give us an example?

Ask: Why is it challenging for people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities to make informed decisions?

- Possible responses may include :Answers should include:
 - People assume they don't have the ability to make an informed decision so they often haven't had a chance to practice.
 - Their cognitive disability makes it harder for them to absorb and process the information required to make an informed decision.
 - The information may be too complex and abstract.
 - There may be too many options and they become overwhelmed.



Ask: Why is it challenging when supporting people with intellectual or other developmental disabilities to make informed decisions?

- Possible responses may include:
 - Staff feel that they “know better” and it their job to do exercise judgments for those whom they support
 - Staff sometimes have their own agenda
 - Staff feel that enabling informed decision-making takes too long
 - Staff often don’t have the particular skills needed to support informed decision-making

Say:

For all these reasons, this instructional video will be helpful to all direct support professionals in whatever setting they may work—group or individual’s residence, day services, community participation, employment, etc.

Start Video

Introduction

Scene 1 – Keith & Monte at the Mall

How did the DSP handle the situation?

Pause & Discuss

Possible responses may include:

- Monte made the decision for Keith.
- Monte did what any DSP would do under the circumstances.
- Keith never had a chance to sort out the information required by the decision.

Ask: Does this happen in your work experience?

Ask: How often does this happen?

Ask: Why does this happen?

Possible responses may include:

- Staff are assignment-focused and task-centered.
- Staff feel pressured to do the right thing, so they make the decision they feel is best.
- Staff often don’t believe that the person has the right to make the decision
- Staff are in a rush because they have other things to do.
- Staff are afraid to make the wrong decision – negative feedback from management or family.
- Staff are afraid that the person with a disability will regret their decision and/or have a challenging behavior as a consequence.

Re-Start Video

Pause & Discuss

Say:

- Look at the Code of Ethics. #1 - “My first allegiance is to the person I support” and #8 – “I will assist the people I support to direct the course of their own lives.”
- Because it is his own money, he has the right to spend it as he wants. Doesn’t he?
- If you think this will be a difficult situation, know when to report it to a supervisor.
- We must be aware that DSPs are often in the middle of difficult situations such as this one.

Ask: What should the DSP do if in his own value system, he thinks the sneakers are too expensive?

Re- Start video

Pause & Discuss

Say:

- Sometimes DSPs use their value system at the expense of the values of the person being served.
- Be self-aware of your own values. You may not always recognize that you are putting your values ahead of the person you are serving.

Re-Start video

Ask: Does Keith have the right to make his own decision?

Pause & Discuss

Say:

- Since the money is Keith’s, he has the right to make an informed decision and understand the consequences that follow.

Re-Start video

Informed Decision Making Process

Say:

There are two fundamental skills that are used throughout the process when supporting a person in making an informed decision.

1. The first skill is to **keep an open mind** and not be overly judgmental, even if what the person desires seems unrealistic to you.
It’s important not to shoot down their dream; instead, help them explore it.
2. The second skill that you will also use throughout the informed decision making process is **Active Listening**.



Active Listening is how you help someone make an informed decision.

THREE Components to Active Listening:

- 1) **Repeat** – you restate what the person communicates;
- 2) **Ask** – you ask clarifying questions and observe body language to ensure understanding;
- 3) **Validate** – you acknowledge the person’s feelings and desires.

There are FIVE Steps to Support a Person to make an Informed Decision: Each step is essential and should be explored before moving on to the next step

- 1) **Understand what the person wants.**
- 2) **Gather information.**
- 3) **Explore options and possible outcomes.**
- 4) **Empower them to make their choice a reality.** For some important decisions, more time may be needed to make a final decision.
- 5) **Evaluate** what worked and what needs to change.

Pause & Discuss

Distribute the Hand-out called Informed Decision Making Process

Optional Exercise

Divide group into small groupings of 3 people each. Ask participants to think about the situation they thought of earlier where they made an informed decision for themselves.

Ask: Did you follow the steps of the Informed Decision Making Process?

Ask: If someone helped you, did they use Active Listening and Keep an Open Mind?

Ask: Would anyone like to share?

Scene 2 – Glenn & Claude - Should I quit my job?

Pause & Discuss

Say: Based on the Informed Decision Making Process we just reviewed, how do you think the DSP handled the situation?

Responses may include:

- A mistake staff made is not having an open mind. Claude imposed his own values and disempowered Glenn.
- Claude did not actively listen
- Claude didn’t even begin to go through the steps
- Claude was more concerned about what staff went through

Ask: Why do you think he handled it this way?

Responses may include:

- Claude may have thought it was in Glenn's best interest to keep the job.
- Claude may be right but he didn't handle it correctly.

Say:

- Don't rush. Decisions don't always have to be made immediately.
- Seek guidance and support from the rest of the team. There's a team to support you. With life decisions like this you need to bring it back to the team.
- If it's a major life decision, like quitting a job, moving, getting married, etc., it is strongly suggested that DSPs check in with a supervisor and include the team.

Re-Start video

Scene 3 – Clarabel & Kristen – Which pants does she want?

Pause & Discuss

Ask: Why do you think the DSP didn't involve Clarabel in the decision to buy pants?

Responses may include:

- DSP may not know how to involve her.
- DSP may not think she's capable of making an informed decision.

Re-Start video

What did the DSP do differently?

Pause & Discuss

Say: Think about the difference between Informed Choice vs. Illusion of Choice. Based on the Informed Decision Making Process we just went over, how do you think the DSP handled the situation?

Pause & Discuss

Ask: How did each step of the Informed Decision Making Process play out in this scene?

❖ **Distribute Hand-Out : Informed Decision Making Process Steps**

Discussion Guide:

Step #1 – Understand what the person wants



- Some background information is that Clarabel has always liked shopping for new clothes when the seasons change.

Step #2 – Gather information

- What you didn't see is that the DSP and Clarabel did look at different racks of clothes before looking at the pants.

Ask: Given that we didn't see the last step. How would you evaluate her decision?

(If the majority of the audience is DSPs who support people who use alternative methods to communicate, you may want to show the scene again to highlight the how the choice was presented and made)

Re-Start Video

Scene 4 – Mike and Jordan – I want to be a fireman

Ask: How do you think the DSP, Jordan, responded to Mike?
How might you have responded if you also thought the person was making an unrealistic choice?

Pause & Discuss

Re-Start Video

Pause & Discuss

Say: Before we answer that question, please consider the following:

Ask: How did Jordan handle the situation?

Ask: Do you think that Jordan thought it was realistic for Mike to be a dispatcher? Why or why not?

Ask: How did Jordan, while keeping an open mind and using active listening, handle Mike's seemingly unrealistic desire of being a fireman?

Responses may include:

- He kept an open mind.
- He enabled Mike to explore options.
- He offered an additional option that might be more realistic and might fulfill Mike's desire to be involved in the fire department.
- He didn't rush Mike and asked probing questions that enabled Mike to come to his own conclusion that he couldn't be a fireman.

Say: Now return to question, based on the Informed Decision Making Process. Which step are they on? Refer to your Informed Decision Making Process Handout.

Step #1 – Understand what the person wants

- Mike wants to work at the Fire Department

Step #2 – Gather information

- Mike is learning about possible opportunities

Re-Start Video

Scene 5 – Ivan – Exploring Community Options

Pause & Discuss

Ask: How did the staff use active listening to gather information about what Ivan likes and dislikes?

What are the 3 Components of Active Listening?

- 1) **Repeat** – restate what the person communicates
- 2) **Ask** – ask clarifying questions and observe body language to ensure understanding
- 3) **Validate** – acknowledge the person’s feelings and desires

Say: Let’s explore them further and how they were used in the scene you just saw.

Discussion Guide:

The 1st component is Repeat – Restating what he communicates. Putting his actions/non-verbal communication into words.

- How did that play out? “Oh. You don’t want to garden.”
- With the food bank it’s hard to restate what he’s communicating because we don’t know his feelings. That’s why they’re going to try it again.

The 2nd component is Ask and **Observe**

- Ivan was not interested in gardening. He shook his head and turned around.
- Ivan clearly liked and was comfortable interacting with the dog.

The 3rd component is Validate – You acknowledge his feelings and desires.

- “Oh. Ok. You like dogs.”

(If the majority of the audience is DSPs, who use alternative methods to communicate, you may want to show the scene again to highlight the components of Active Listening)

Re-Start Video

Scene 6 – Phone Call – Bonnie and Shaunda – Why can’t I see my friend?

Pause & Discuss

Ask: How did Shaunda support Bonnie by using the Informed Decision Making Process?
Review each step.

Say: Refer to the [Informed Decision Making Handout](#).



Discussion Guide:

Step #1 – Understand what the person wants

- Shaunda asked Bonnie what she wanted

Step #2 – Gather information

- Shaunda spoke to the experienced staff to advocate for Bonnie and supported Bonnie to advocate for herself.

Step #3 – Explore Options and Possible Outcomes

- Shaunda talked with Bonnie about what she wanted to do with her friend

Step #4 – If ready, empower them to make their choice a reality.

- Bonnie chose to go to the movies with her friend. With staff support, she and Virginia went to the movies.

Step #5 – Evaluate

Ask: How would you do this in this situation?

Ask: Why did Shaunda go to the staff first before encouraging Bonnie to advocate for herself?

- She wanted to make sure Bonnie wouldn't be shut down when she went to advocate for herself.

Say: Having Bonnie see her friend outside of work, which is what she wants, coincides with the **federal HCBS Settings Regulations** which states, "Enable individuals to freely choose with whom to interact" and the right to have visitors when they choose at any time of the day. It also is in line with the **CQL Personal Outcome Measures** that "People have friends" and with OPWDD's Core Competency, Building and Maintaining Relationships.

Re-Start video

Scene 7 – Dinner – What's for dinner?

Pause & Discuss

Ask: Was that an Informed Choice or Illusion of Choice?

Confirm by Saying: It was an Illusion of Choice because:

- You can't know if you like something based on a picture.
- A picture helps but when it comes to food, you often need to taste it
- Tasting or trying the food is best.
- Try different condiments.

Re-Start video

Pause & Discuss

Ask: How did the DSP provide support by using the Informed Decision Making Process?
Review each step

Say: Refer to the [Informed Decision Making Handout](#).

Discussion Guide:

Step #1 – Understand what the person wants

- They want good tasting food that is also healthy.

Step #2 – Gather information

- The manager met with the dietician and got some healthy dinner options.

Step #3 – Explore Options and Possible Outcomes

- Ideally, they would discover their likes and dislikes by tasting different foods like the manager suggested at the end.
- When discussing pizza, they all seem to know what pizza tastes like.

Step #4 – If ready, empower them to make their choice a reality.

- They chose to make healthy pizza for dinner.

Step #5 – Evaluate

Ask: How would you do this in this situation?

Re-Start Video: Play it to the end

Application Exercise

Say:

Now that you've learned how to support people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities to make informed decisions, it's time for you to put it into practice.

Think of a person you support and a decision or choice in their life. How would you plan to support them using the 5 steps of the Informed Decision Making Process?

Be prepared to share with the group.