



**Government  
of South Australia**

Office of the Public Advocate

# Decision-Making Capacity

Easy Read fact sheet



## How to use this fact sheet



The Office of the Public Advocate (OPA) wrote this fact sheet.

When you see the word 'we', it means OPA.



We wrote this fact sheet in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.

Not bold  
**Bold**

We wrote some important words in **bold**.

This means the letters are thicker and darker.



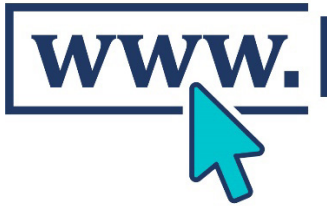
We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 11.



This Easy Read fact sheet is a summary of another fact sheet.

This means it only includes the most important ideas.



You can find the other fact sheet on our website.

[www.opa.sa.gov.au/information-service/fact-sheets](http://www.opa.sa.gov.au/information-service/fact-sheets)



You can ask for help to read this fact sheet.

A friend, family member or support person  
may be able to help you.

## What is decision-making capacity?

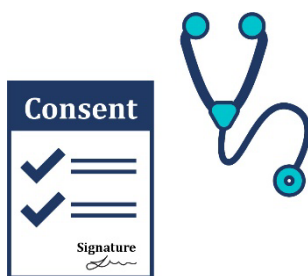


When you are over 18 years old, there are decisions you must make.

These decisions might be:



- signing legal documents



- giving **consent** for medical treatment.



When you give your consent, you say it is okay for someone to do something.



If you can make decisions on your own, we say you have **decision-making capacity**.

You can still have decision-making capacity even if you:



- don't understand all the details



- can only remember things for a short time

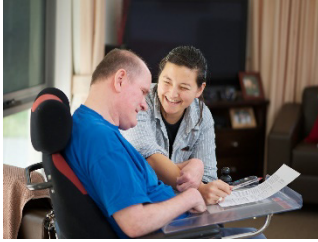


- make a decision that doesn't work out well



- can only make some decisions.

## What decisions can you make?



Some people can't make decisions on their own.



You might be able to make some decisions, but not others.



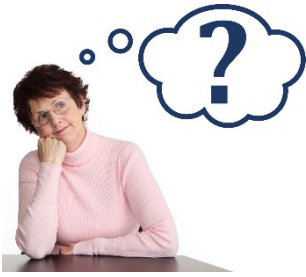
Some people need support to make decisions because they have:

- a disability
- an illness
- an injury.



When you can't make decisions on your own, we say your decision-making capacity is **impaired**.

You might not be able to understand:



- all the information about a decision



- what might go wrong if you make a decision.

## Who can help you make decisions?



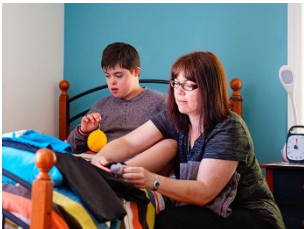
When your decision-making capacity is impaired, other people can:

- help you make decisions
- make decisions for you.



You might get help to make decisions from a:

- family member
- friend.



Someone might make decisions for you, like a **guardian**.



A guardian is someone who makes decisions for you about:

- your health
- where you live
- who you live with
- personal matters.





The Public Advocate is set up by the government in South Australia.



Our Public Advocate can be chosen to be your guardian by the South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (SACAT).



SACAT help people find ways to work out:

- problems
- disagreements.



SACAT find ways that:

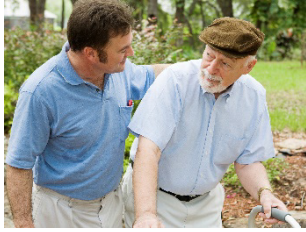
- are fair
- follow the law.



A **substitute decision-maker** might make decisions for you.



This is someone you choose to make decisions for you.



A **person responsible** might make decisions for you.



A person responsible is someone who makes decisions about your health care.

## Word list

This list explains what the **bold** words in this document mean.



### **Consent**

When you give your consent, you say it is okay for someone to do something.



### **Decision-making capacity**

If you can make decisions on your own, we say you have decision-making capacity.

### **Guardian**

A guardian is someone who makes decisions for you about:



- your health
- where you live
- who you live with
- personal matters.



### **Impaired**

When you can't make decisions on your own, we say your decision-making capacity is impaired.



### **Person responsible**

A person responsible is someone who makes decisions about your health care.



### **Substitute decision-maker**

A substitute decision-maker is someone you choose to make decisions for you.

## Contact us



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