

Whaimana
Support My Decisions



Whaimana – Support My Decisions:

How to do Supported Decision-Making

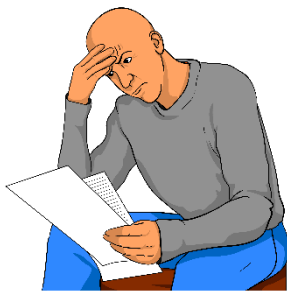


Published: June 2026

Before you start



This is a long document.



It can be hard for some people to read a document this long.



Some things you can do to make it easier are:

- read it a few pages at a time
- set aside some quiet time to look at it
- have someone read it with you to support you to understand it.

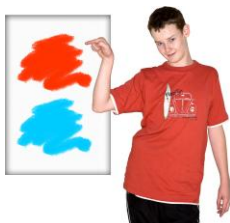


What is in here

Page number:



About this Easy Read4



How to do supported
decision-making8



Step 1: Choosing
decision-supporters.....12



Step 2: Help the decision-supporter
get to know the decision-maker20



Step 3: Gather information50



Step 4: Think about the options56

Page number:



Step 5: Make the decision.....63



Step 6: How did it go?67



More information73

About this Easy Read

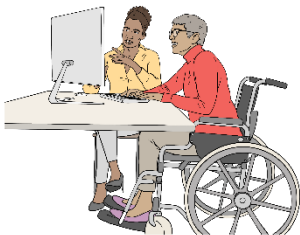


This Easy Read is about the website
**Whaimana – Support My
Decisions.**



Whaimana – Support My Decisions
is a website that shares things about
supported decision-making like:

- information
- **resources.**



Supported decision-making is a
way to:

- support people to make choices
about their own lives

with

- the support of the people they
choose.





Here **resources** are things to assist people with supported decision-making like having information from different organisations.

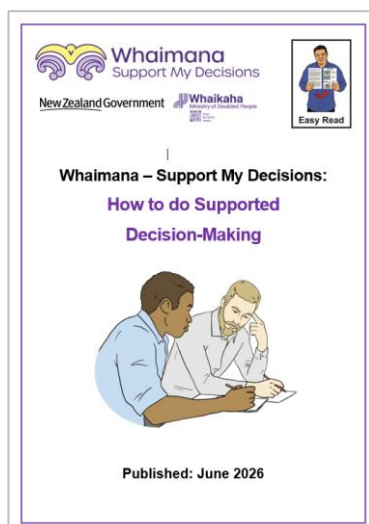


Whaimana – Support My Decisions is called **Whaimana** for short in this Easy Read.



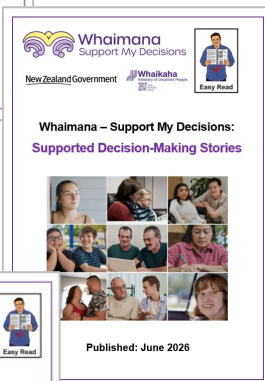
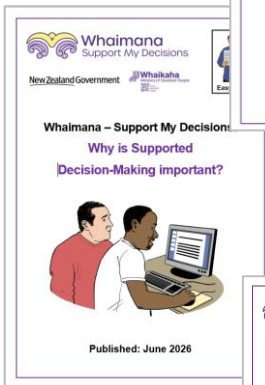
In this document the people who:

- make decisions are called **decision-makers**
- support decision-makers **decision-supporters.**



This Easy Read is called:

Whaimana – Support My Decisions: How to do Supported Decision-Making.



There are 5 other Easy Reads about what is on the Whaimana website:

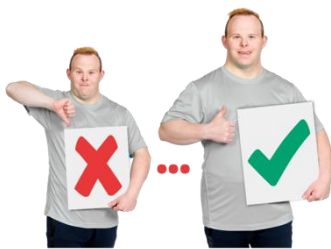
- About our website
- What is Supported Decision-Making?
- Why is Supported Decision-Making Important?
- Supported Decision-Making Stories
- Changes to New Zealand Laws to do with Decision-Making.



You can visit the Whaimana **website** at:

www.supportmydecisions.nz

The Whaimana website has been made by the **Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha**.



The **Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha** works to make change for disabled people to make their lives better.



The Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha makes things better for disabled people by working with:



- the Government
- the community
- businesses.



When you see the words **we / us / our** in this document they mean the Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha.

How to do supported decision-making



It is important to:

- know different ways of doing supported decision-making
- have all the tools / things needed to support a decision-maker to make a decision.



You do not need to use all the tools for every decision.

You use the tools that are right for the:



- decision-maker
- decision being made.



Supported decision-making will look different for:

- each person
- each decision being made.



There are things you can think about when supporting a decision-maker.

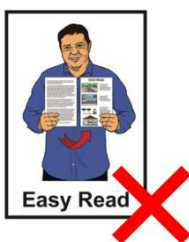
We will tell you about some:



- steps you can take
- ideas to assist you to support the decision-maker.



In the next parts of this Easy Read we tell you more about the steps to take when making a supported decision.



The steps are:

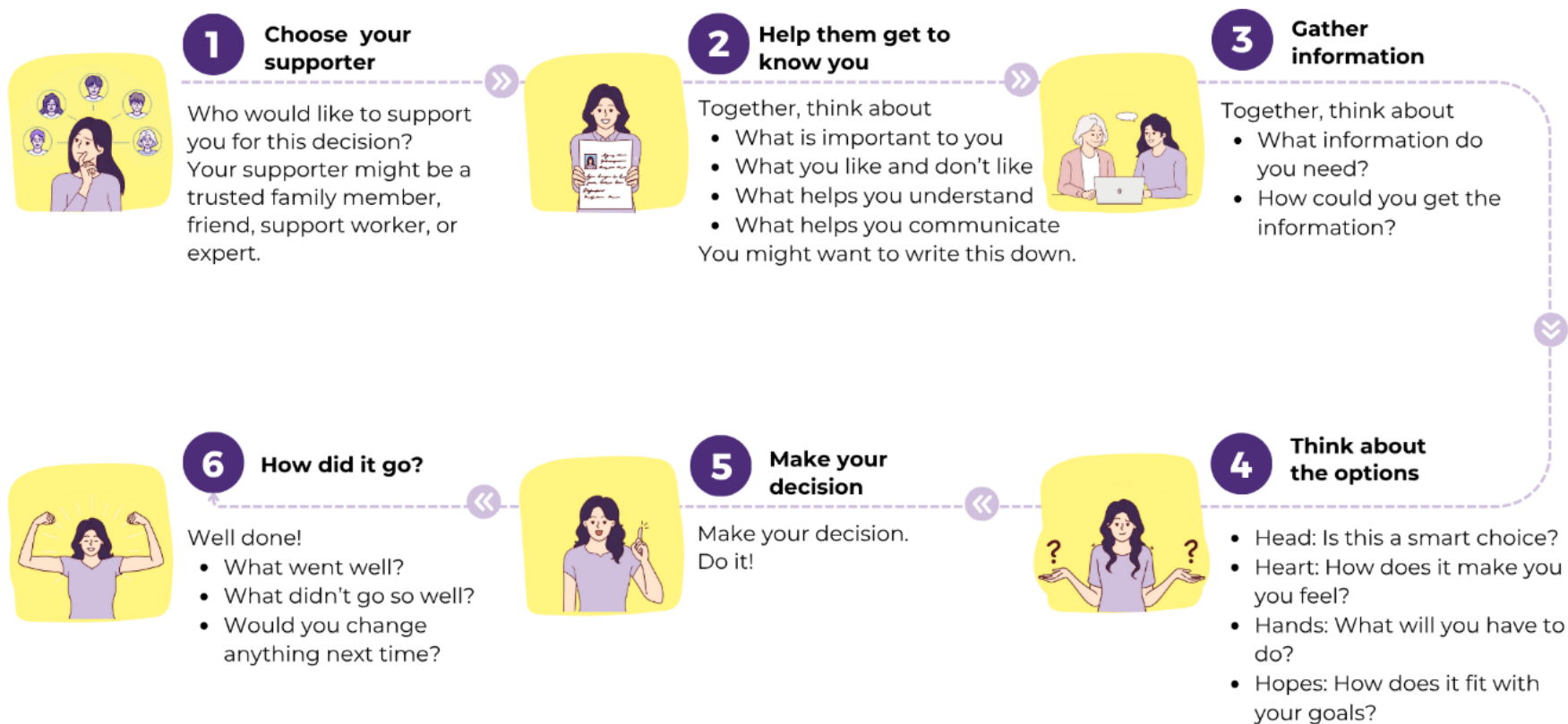
- Step 1: Choosing decision-supporters
- Step 2: Help the decision-supporter get to know the decision-maker
- Step 3: Gather information
- Step 4: Think about the options
- Step 5: Make the decision
- Step 6: How did it go?

We have made a poster for decision-makers about the steps to take at this **website**:

www.supportmydecisions.nz/300

This poster is **not** in Easy Read.

How to make decisions with support



Step 1: Choosing decision-supporters



Good support means having the right people to take part in making decisions.



Step 1 is about who the decision-maker would like to support them to make their decision.



When choosing a decision-supporter the decision-maker needs to think about who they:

- would like to support them to make the decision
- trust.





Your decision-supporters can be people you trust like:

- whānau / family members
- friends
- neighbours
- people you work with
- people from your faith / church community
- support workers
- **advocates**
- **experts** like your doctor.



Advocates are people who speak up for you.



An **expert** is a person who:

- knows a lot of information about something
- has done a lot of training to learn about something.



What a good decision-supporter does

A good decision-supporter supports the decision-maker to:

- make the decision
- speak up for themselves
- be more confident / happy to make decisions by telling them good things like:
 - you are doing well
 - you can do it.





A good decision-supporter believes the decision-maker is able to make the decision.



A good decision-supporter supports the decision-maker by:

- telling them the things they need to know in a way they can understand
- waiting calmly for them to make their decision as decisions can take time.



It is important the decision-supporter respects the choices the decision-maker makes.



Decision-supporters must not control the decision.



Decision-supporters need to understand how **cultural** differences might affect how they give advice.



Cultural means things to do with a **culture**.



Culture is a way of:

- thinking that a group shares
- doing things as a group.



There are many different cultures in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Some examples of the different cultures are:

- Māori culture
- Pacifica culture
- Deaf culture.





The decision-supporter needs to:

- be honest with the decision-maker
- share information with other decision-supporters the decision-maker has chosen to work with.



A team of decision-supporters

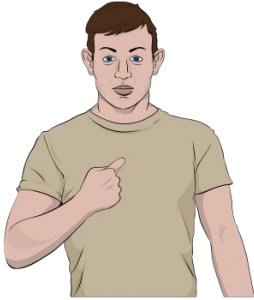
It is a good idea to have a team / group of people to support a decision-maker.



This group is sometimes called a circle of support.



Some good questions to ask when getting a team together for the decision-maker are:



- who do they trust?
- who knows them best?
- who can support their cultural life?
- what type of decisions might they help with?



Different people can support with different kinds of decisions.



For example a decision-maker can choose 1 supporter to help them make decisions in 1 part of their life.

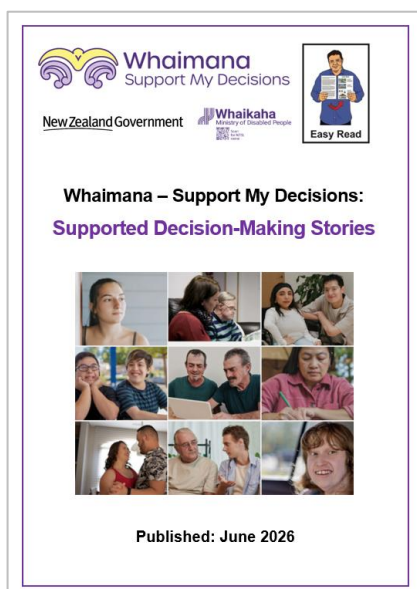


A decision-maker can choose a different supporter to help them make decisions in a different part of their life.



You can read a story about Chris who chose more than 1 decision-supporter at this **website**:

www.supportmydecisions.nz/how-to-do-sdm/choose-the-supporter



You can find an Easy Read translation of Chris's story at:

<https://tinyurl.com/3mwshsmn>

Step 2: Help the decision-supporter get to know the decision-maker



Good decision support is about the decision-supporter understanding:

- the decision-maker
- what support works for the decision-maker.



It may be good to write some things down about what can support a decision-maker.

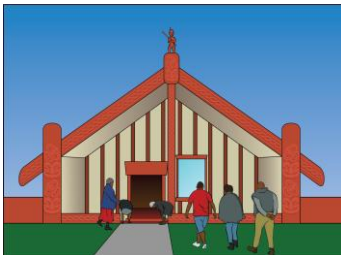


Support a decision-maker to know what:

- **is important**
- **support is needed.**



Good decision-making is about the decision-supporter understanding the decision-maker.



Think about the whole person.

Te Whare Tapa Whā is a Māori model / way to think about:



- **health**
- and**
- **wellbeing.**



Wellbeing means things like:

- how we feel about ourselves
- looking after our bodies with good food and exercise
- getting support when we are sad or worried.



Imagine wellbeing as a house with 4 walls.



Each wall is about a different part of our:

- health
- life.



The 4 walls are:

- physical wellbeing / to do with your body
- mental and emotional wellbeing
- family and social wellbeing / friends
- spiritual wellbeing / what you believe in.

Each wall is important for our life.



If 1 wall is weak it makes the whole house shaky.

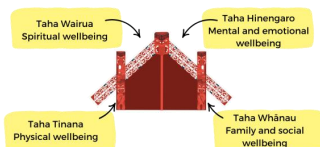


Good decision support means the decision-supporter must:

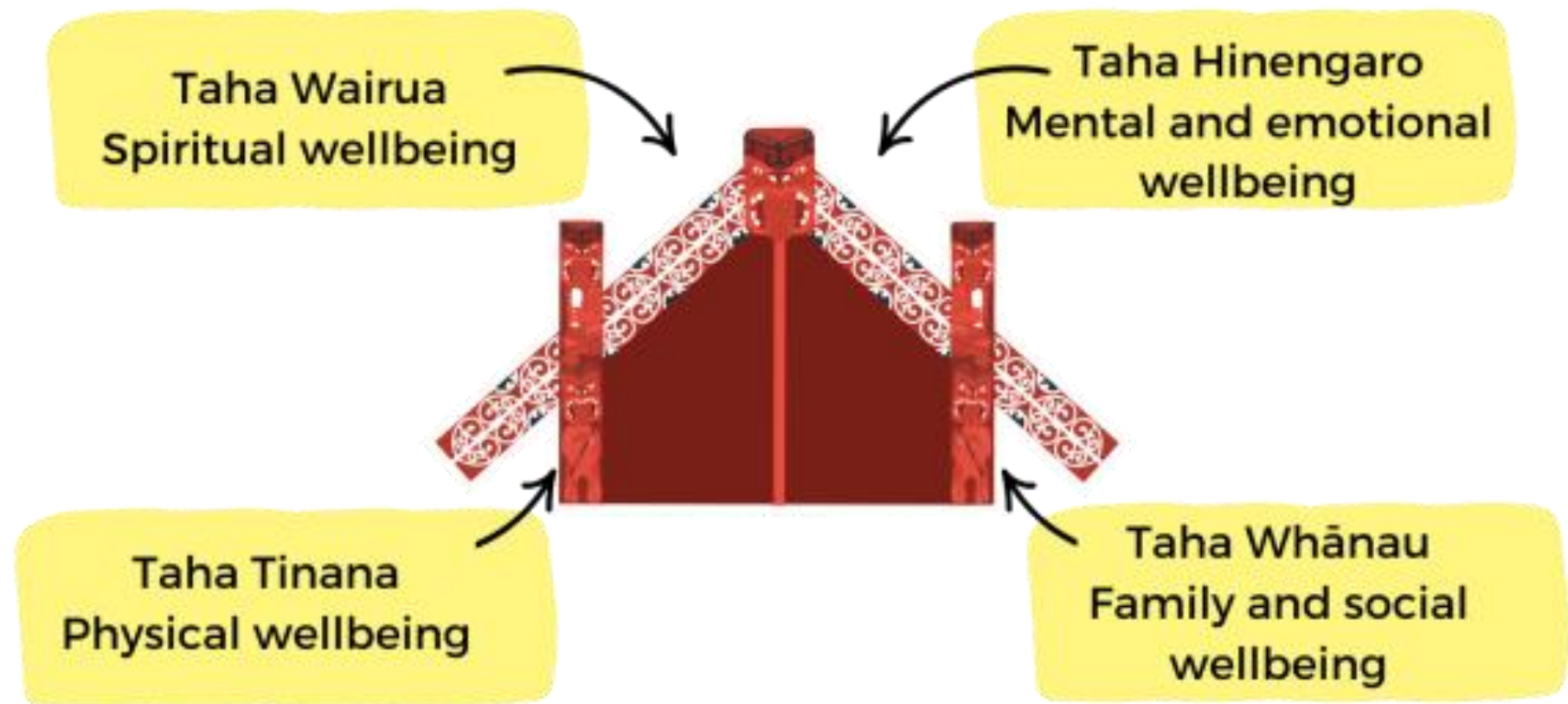
- understand the whole person
- understand what support helps them make decisions.



We need to think about all 4 walls of Te Whare Tapa Whā when making decisions.



There is a big picture of Te Whare Tapa Whā on the next page.





Taha Wairua / Spiritual Wellbeing

Taha wairua is about what:

- gives your life meaning
- supports you to feel connected to something bigger than yourself like your whenua / land.



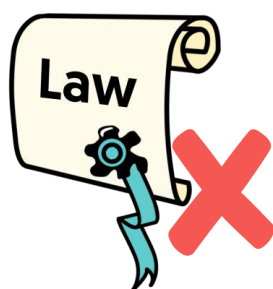
In supported decision-making good decision-supporters need to understand what is important to the decision-maker.



This means decision-supporters need to understand things about the decision-maker like their:

- **will**
- **preferences.**





Here **will** means the things about the decision-maker like:

- their long-term goals like wanting to stay healthy
- values / what is important to them like staying connected to their family.

Here will does **not** mean a legal will where someone says what they want to happen when they die.

Here **preferences** are the things that the decision-maker likes right now.

A decision-maker can let their decision-supporters know about their preferences by:

- telling them
- showing them.



Decision-supporters will need to know the answers to questions about decision-makers like:



- what do they want their life to look like?
- what do they truly care about?
- who are the important people in their life?
- what makes a good day?
- what motivates them?
- what things are important to them like their:
 - culture
 - beliefs?



Taha Tinana / Physical Wellbeing

Physical things can make choosing hard to do.



Things that can make it hard are when the decision-maker:

- finds it hard to:
 - talk
 - move
 - hear
 - see
- feels tired
- is in pain
- is injured / hurt
- feels sick / unwell.





Examples of things that can support a decision-maker are:

- tools to support them to communicate like a communication board
- sign language support
- using pictures
- comfortable spaces
- taking breaks
- talking when the person is not:
 - tired
 - hungry.





Taha Hinengaro / Mental Wellbeing

Some feelings can make choosing hard to do.



These can be feelings like:

- low confidence / not feeling like you can do something
- feeling sad
- feeling worried
- bad experiences you have had before.





Examples of things that might support feelings are:

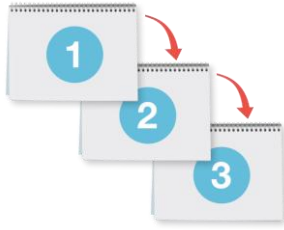
- encouraging / giving support
- giving the decision-maker the time they need
- making calm spaces
- celebrating small wins
- talking with someone like a counsellor.



Some parts of thinking can make choosing hard like:

- memory
- understanding information
- concentration / focusing on 1 thing.





Examples of things that might help thinking are:

- reading a little at a time
- using pictures
- using easy language
- taking time
- checking that the decision-maker understands what is happening.





Taha Whānau / Family and Social Wellbeing

Social things can make choosing hard like:



- feeling alone
- not having supporters
- supporters / family members not:
 - listening
 - understanding.



Examples of social things that might help are:

- circles of support
- being part of the community
- family taking part in decisions.





More examples of social things that might help are:

- advocacy / getting support to speak up
- getting cultural support.

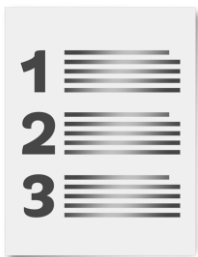


Note it down

It can be helpful for the decision-supporter and decision-maker to note / write down:



- what is important to the decision-maker
- what supports them to:
 - understand
 - communicate / say what they want
- who they want to help them make decisions.



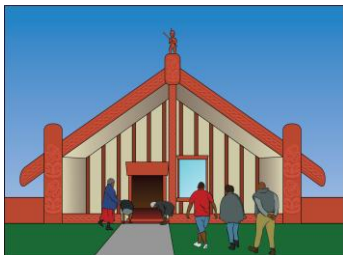


A simple guide can be made by using:

- easy words
- pictures if they will be helpful.



Share the guide with other decision-supporters to help them understand.



Understand how Māoritanga is important

It important to understand a Māori decision-maker.



This means understanding how **Māoritanga** is important to a Māori decision-maker.



Māoritanga is about:

- Māori culture
- ways of being Māori.



Māoritanga can be important in:

- understanding what is important to the decision-maker about their support needs
- giving support that is
 - respectful
 - comfortable
- giving support that safeguards / protects wellbeing.





It is useful for decision-supporters to know this kind of information about Māori decision-makers before supporting them to make big decisions.



Social connections: How are whānau / family important to the person?

Whānau is often important:

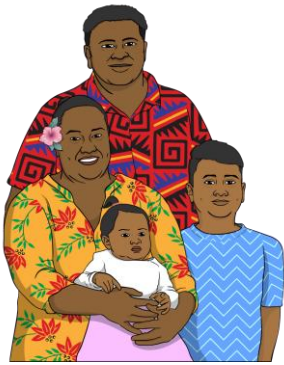
- to Māori decision-makers
- when supporting the wellbeing of Māori decision-makers.



For the Māori decision-maker whānau can be people:

- like **extended family**
- in the community
- like close friends.





Extended family is more than:

- parents
- and
- children.



It also includes other family members like:

- grandparents
- aunts / uncles
- cousins.



Decision-supporters need to think:

- about the will and preferences of Māori decision-makers

when

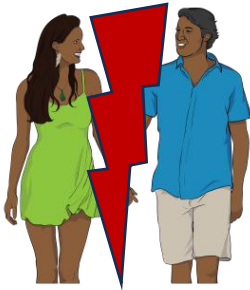
- decisions are about whānau / family connections.





Some decisions about whānau / family connections are things like:

- visits to see people
- celebrations like:
 - weddings
 - birthdays
 - sports games.



Other things to think about are the changes in whānau / family like:

- divorce / when people stop being married
- health worries
- people moving away.





Other cultural things to think about can be:

- going to tangihanga / funerals
- dealing with grief / loss of a person
- giving manaakitanga / care to others.
- taking part in cultural events like:
 - kapa haka
 - Matariki / Māori new year.





Spiritual wellbeing: How is wairua important to the person?

Wairua is the spirit / soul of a person.



Here are some useful questions to think about for:

- decision-supporters

and

- tāngata whaikaha Māori / disabled Māori people.



Questions about the Māori decision-maker can be:

- what is the place they feel most connected to?
- where would they most want to live?





Other questions about the Māori decision-maker can be:

- who would they most want to live with?
- what helps them feel at peace / calm?
- what supports their wairua?
- do they have important roles / jobs in their:
 - whānau / family
 - whare / house
 - community?





Understand the decisions a decision-maker often makes

Decision-supporters should understand the will and preferences of decision-makers for decisions they make often / a lot.



Doing this can make supported decision-making easier.



Common decisions can be things like:

- where to live
- who to live with
- how to manage / control money.





Other common decisions can be things like:

- about care
- about hobbies
- who to spend time with
- health / healthcare
- holidays
- relationships
- what future plans will look like for example:
 - a **will**
 - an **Enduring Power of Attorney / EPOA.**

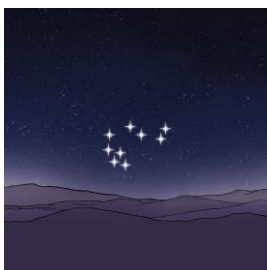


Here a **will**:

- is a legal document
- says what should happen to your important things after you die.



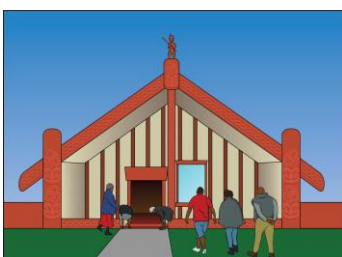
An **Enduring Power of Attorney / EPOA** is a legal document that says who you want to make decisions for you if you cannot make decisions for yourself.



How are cultural events / activities important to the decision-maker?



Decision-supporters of tāngata whaikaha Māori / disabled Māori should be ready for decisions about important cultural:



- events
- activities.



Supporters need to know what is happening so Māori decision-makers do not miss out on important cultural events.



Supporters should find out about Māori culture from people who know a lot about Māori culture.

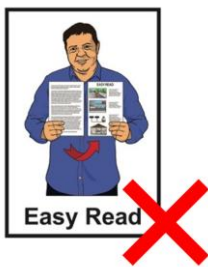


Doing this can mean the decision-maker will not miss out on making decisions about taking part in cultural events.



We have made a list of some common Māoritanga decisions at our **website**:

<https://tinyurl.com/MTDecisions>



This list is not in Easy Read.



Avoid assumptions.

Assumptions are when you:

- think a person can do / not do something

and

- you do not know if that person can do / not do something.





Some experiences are common / the same for tāngata whaikaha Māori.



Not all experiences are the same for tāngata whaikaha Māori.

Decision-supporters should remember:



- every Māori person is unique / different
- people want to take part in their Māori culture in different ways
- there are differences between each:



- iwi / tribe
- hapū
- whānau / family.



Step 3: Gather information



Supporters support decision-makers to:

- understand the decision
- understand the different options
- have all the information needed to make the decision.



Understand the decision



Supporters can often get into the habit of making decisions for the decision-maker.



The supporter may not be used to making decisions.



First the:

- supporter needs to believe the decision-maker can make the decision
- decision-maker needs to believe they can make the decision.



Think about the decision that needs to be made like:



- how does the decision-maker feel about it?
- is this a new kind of decision for the decision-maker?
- has the decision-maker made decisions like this before?
- does the decision need to be made quickly?

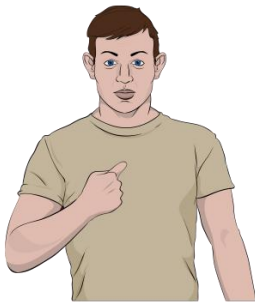




Every decision is important.

Supporters should find out:

- how does this decision matter to the decision-maker?
- how does it connect to their:
 - life goals
 - dreams?

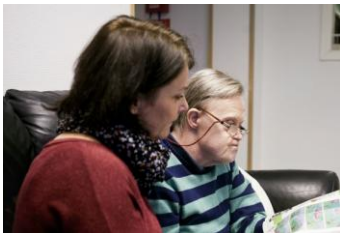


Making a big decision can feel like a very hard thing to do.

Break big decisions down into:

- smaller questions
- easy questions.





For example:

- instead of asking Where do I want to go on holiday?

ask

- do I want to go on holiday?

Read the story about how Noah is supported to choose his meals at this **website**:

<https://tinyurl.com/3mwshsmn>

Gather information

The supporter needs to:

- think about information needed to make the decision
- get all the information needed to make the decision.



You can get this information from:

- places that you trust
- more than 1 place.



The decision-supporter can also give the decision-maker information in a way they can understand like Easy Read.



There are different ways to get the information you need like:

- using what you already know
- searching the internet
- using Easy Read information
- talking to people who have made decisions like this before.





Other ways to get the information you need are things like:

- asking people who know a lot about something for advice
- trying out different things if possible
- making a list of options.



For more information about gathering information visit our website at:

www.supportmydecisions.nz/304

Step 4: Think about the options



The supporter supports the decision-maker to think about the different options.



This supports the decision-maker to understand what is a good choice for them.



Whaimana talks about 4 different kinds of thinking to guide decision-making:

- head thinking
- heart thinking
- hands thinking
- hopes thinking.





Head thinking

Head thinking questions are about making sure something is a smart choice for the decision-maker.



Head thinking questions are:

- is this a smart choice for me?
- what are the good things that might happen?
- what are the bad things that might happen?
- can I make the **risk** of bad things happening smaller?



Here a **risk** is when something could go wrong.



Heart thinking

Heart thinking questions are about how the decision makes the decision-maker feel.



A question for the decision-maker when heart thinking is:

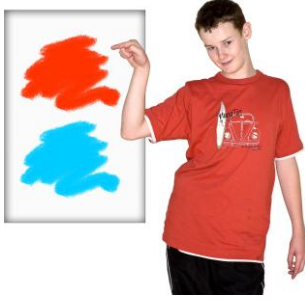
- how does this choice make me feel?



Hand thinking

Hand thinking questions are about what things the decision-maker will have to do to make the decision.





Questions for the decision-maker when hand thinking are:

- what will I have to do?
- how much:
 - time will it take?
 - effort it will take?
 - will it cost?
- who else will take part in making the decision?

Hope thinking



Here **hope** means the things you would like to happen when you have made the decision.



Questions for the decision-maker when hope thinking are:

- how does it fit with my goals?
- how does it fit with the things that are important to me?
- how does it fit with what I want?



Looking at the options

The supporter and decision-maker can make a list together about the options.

Good	Bad

To write this list:

- draw a line down the middle of a piece of paper
- on 1 side write the good things about the option
- on the other side write the bad things about the option.

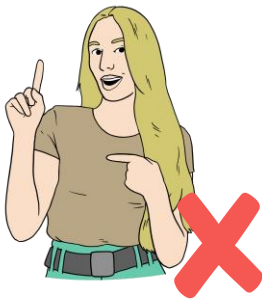




Decision-supporters should think carefully about all the options that will work for the decision-maker like what they:



- think
- feel
- want.



The decision is not about what the decision-supporter thinks is best.



It is important to remember everyone has the right to take risks.

Choices usually involve some risk.



The decision-supporter can help the decision-maker understand the risks.



The decision-supporter and decision-maker can think of ways:

- to reduce / lessen the risk

and

- still support the decision-maker to make the best decision for them.



If the decision-maker:

- understands what might happen

then

- their choice should usually be respected.



Step 5: Make the decision



The decision-maker should think about all the options before making the decision.



The decision-maker then chooses the option that feels right for them.



Making decisions supports decision-makers to be happy to make more decisions.



For decision-makers

Things to remember are:

- this is your decision
- you have the right to choose what you want
- your choice matters most
- it is okay to take your time
- you just need to make the right choice for you.





For the decision-supporter

Things to remember are:



- listen very carefully to the decision-maker
- watch them closely to support you to understand what they think



- respect the choice they make



- the choice is not always the choice you would make



- support the decision-maker to be confident / happy to make more decisions.



Take action

Make the decision real.



This might mean:

- making an easy-to-understand record / note of the decision
- making a plan about the decision
- getting the right support
- making sure everyone who has taken part understands the:
 - decision
 - plan
- putting the decision into action
- being ready to change things if needed.



Step 6: How did it go?



Now that the decision has been made think about how it went.

This supports the decision-maker to:

- learn more about decision-making
- be better at making decisions.



Things for the decision-maker to think about

It is good for you to think about:

- how you felt about the decision
- if you felt supported
- if your decision-supporter knew what was important to you when making the decision.





It is important to think about how communication was during the decision-making process like:



- what helped you to share your thoughts?
- did your supporter really listen to you?
- did you have enough time to decide?



Think about the risk your decision may have had like:



- did your supporter help you understand all the options?
- did you feel supported to manage / control the risks?



Now think about what you learned when you were making your decision like:



- would you do anything different next time?
- what helped you feel confident / happy about making the decision?



- are there other decisions you want to make?



Things for decision-supporters to think about

Decision-supporters should think about things like:

- did you really understand the preferences of the decision-maker?
- could you put aside your own ideas about what the decision should be?



Think how you supported the choices and risks by asking yourself these questions:

- how did you look at the different options?
- did you support the person even when choices seemed risky?
- did you understand your own feelings about risk?





Now think about if you celebrated the decision when it was made like:

- were you really happy the decision-maker made their own decision?



- was the decision really what the decision-maker wanted?

Think about what you learned together as a supporter and decision-maker like:



- what made communication work well?

- did you find new ways to support the decision-maker?



- what did you find hard when supporting the decision-maker?



Also think about what you learned together as a supporter and decision-maker like



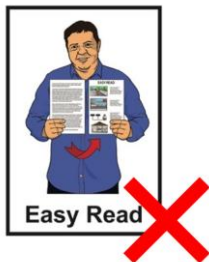
- how can you make things better next time?
- have you noted down what you have learned for next time?

More information



For more information about supported decision-making visit our **website** at:

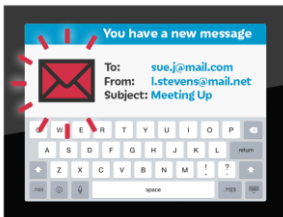
www.supportmydecisions.nz



This website is not in Easy Read.



You can also contact us if you have any questions about Whaimana by:



- **emailing** us at:

contact@whaikaha.govt.nz

- **calling** us at:

0800 942 452.





If you find it hard to use the phone
the **New Zealand Relay** service is for
people who are:

- Deaf / hard of hearing
- deafblind
- speech impaired / find it hard to talk.



You can find out more about the
New Zealand Relay service at:

www.nzrelay.co.nz



This information has been written by the Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha.

It has been translated into Easy Read by the Make it Easy Kia Māmā Mai service of People First New Zealand Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi.

The ideas in this document are not the ideas of People First New Zealand Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi.

All images used in this Easy Read document are subject to copyright rules and cannot be used without permission.

Make it Easy uses images from:

- Photosymbols
- Change Images
- Huriana Kopeke-Te Aho
- SGC Image Works
- T Wood
- Studio Rebeko
- Inga Kramer.