



Whaimana
Support My Decisions

Know what's important and what helps

Adapted in 2026 by Accessible Formats Service,
Blind Low Vision NZ, Auckland

Transcriber's Note: There are two logos at the top of the page. The logo on the left is Whaikaha—Ministry of Disabled People. The logo on the right is Whaimana—Support My Decisions.

Know what's important and what helps

Good decision support is all about the supporter understanding the person and what support works for them.

Thinking about the whole person

Te Whare Tapa Whā model is a Māori approach to health and wellbeing. Imagine well-being as a house with four walls. Each wall is a different part of our health and life:

- Physical
- mental and emotional
- family and social
- spiritual.

Each wall is important. If one wall is weak, the whole house is shaky.

Good decision-support means the supporter must:

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

We need to think about all four walls of Te Whare Tapa Whā.

Taha Wairua: What is important?

Taha wairua is about what gives your life meaning and helps you feel connected to something bigger than yourself. For supported decision-making, good supporters need to understand what is important to the decision-maker (their will and preference).

- 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?
- How are their culture and beliefs important to them?

Taha Tinana: Physical health and body

Physical things can make choosing hard, for example:

- trouble talking
- trouble moving
- not hearing or seeing well
- feeling tired
- being in pain or injured
- feeling sick or unwell.

Examples of things that might help:

- special talking tools
- sign language help
- using pictures
- comfortable spaces
- taking breaks
- talking when the person isn't tired or hungry.

Taha Hinengaro: Feelings and thinking

Feelings can make choosing hard, for example:

- low confidence
- feeling sad
- feeling worried
- past bad experiences.

Examples of things that might help feelings:

- encouragement
- being patient
- creating calm spaces
- celebrating small wins
- talking with a counsellor.

Some parts of thinking can make choosing hard including:

- memory
- understanding information
- concentration.

Examples of things that might help thinking:

- breaking information into small steps
- using pictures
- simple language
- taking time
- checking understanding.

Taha Whānau: Social connections

Social things can make choosing hard including:

- feeling alone
- not having a support network
- supporters or family members not listening or understanding.

Examples of social things that might help:

- circles of support
- community connections
- family involvement
- advocacy (getting help to speak up)
- cultural support.

Note it down

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

- what is important to the person
- what helps them understand and communicate
- who they want to help them make decisions.

Make a simple guide:

- use simple words
- use pictures if helpful.

Share the guide with supporters to help them understand.

For more information visit

<https://www.supportmydecisions.nz/how-to-do-sdm/get-to-know> or www.supportmydecisions.nz/302

End of Know what's important and what helps