

A Resource for Consumers

Shared Decision Making

You can strengthen the partnership with your health care providers to help make better decisions about your health with shared decision making.

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What Is Shared Decision Making?

Shared decision making is a way for you to work with your providers to help make decisions and select treatment and services that may be best suited for you. Telling your providers what you value may help guide the decisions you make as partners to support wellness. It really is about sharing in a 2-way conversation with your providers.

Roles in the shared partnership

The partnership between you and your providers in shared decision making is based on respect.

1. Your providers should respect the special knowledge you have about yourself.
2. You should respect the special knowledge your providers have about your condition.

Your role

Always remember your role is as important as your providers' roles. You are the expert of your life. Your role is to make sure your providers know your:

- Experiences
- Life history
- Preferences
- Values
- Cultural beliefs
- Treatment history (what worked or didn't work for you in the past)
- What matters to you

Your Providers' Roles

Your providers know about your condition. They understand treatment and support options. Their role is to make sure that you have all the details about various options for you. They can also help you make crucial decisions if you want.



The more your providers know about you, the better the partnership can be at creating a support plan that meets your needs.



Tips to Be More Active in Your Decision Making

- **Prepare for your visits.** Make a list of your concerns and questions and take them with you.
- **Tell your provider what matters to you.** When he or she asks you questions, answer honestly. This may help him or her understand and respect what matters to you.
- **You might have information that can help your provider.** He or she may also have information that can help you. Be open.
- **Ask questions if things aren't clear.** Ask your provider to explain why he or she is recommending a certain treatment for you. Ask questions until what you hear makes sense.
- **Remember what was said.** It may be helpful to write down what your provider says. Ask your provider for written instructions. Consider taking someone with you to doctor visits.
- **Don't be afraid.** Talk about what you agree and disagree with. That helps keep the discussion open. It also may help find treatment options that match what you prefer.
- **Follow up** on your plan and with your provider.
 - If you say you will do something, try to do it. If you can't, be honest as to why.
 - Contact your provider if you have other questions or concerns. Establish an ongoing dialogue.

You and your treatment journey are unique. It is important to communicate your values, needs, and hopes to those that are helping you on your road to wellness.

Talking About Your Decisions With Others

Making decisions isn't always easy. Telling others about your decisions can also be hard. Some people in your life may not agree with what you decide. This can cause stress. You don't have to defend your decision. But it may help to explain it. For instance, you might say, "I would like to share with you a tough decision I made. I value your support, even if you disagree with what I decided to do."

Questions? Concerns?

Never hesitate to ask. You have a right to know everything about your health and your care.

If you have any questions or concerns about your condition or your care, ask your doctor or a member of your treatment team right away. They are there to help you.