

ENCOURAGING INDEPENDENCE

COMPETENCIES: COMMUNITY LIVING SKILLS & SUPPORTS, EMPOWERMENT & ADVOCACY

PREZI LINK: <https://prezi.com/view/SjRGVjITYB7D5QQ8vLfM/>



INTRODUCTION

You're likely familiar with the saying, "Give a man a fish, feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, feed him for a lifetime." In our profession, it can seem easier to step in and provide someone with what we think he needs, rather than to teach new skills or to foster independent decision-making. It's easy to slip into thinking that your job is to hand-hold or to prevent someone you support from making mistakes by trying new things their own way. You might even feel anxious about not performing your work properly unless you're constantly in control or prompting behavior frequently. But in the long run, we do the people we support a disservice by stepping in too soon. By eliminating opportunities to make choices or learn, we restrict a person's independence and reinforce dependence. Walking the fine line of providing support while promoting independence is critical.

CHOICES

Provide appropriate choices and options to encourage growth and independence.

Be selective about the type and number of choices by matching them to an individual's current abilities or the given situation.

SUPPORTS

What do you need to teach the people you support in order to help them make choices and carry out tasks?

How can using visual, communication, or sensory strategies assist you in teaching decision-making?

INDEPENDENCE

CATEGORIES

Consider the types of decision-making a person might be ready to take part in. Sometimes it's helpful to categorize these, so that you can support an individual toward a goal in self-care, personal finance, transportation, or at work.

COMMUNICATION

How does someone you support make his choices known?

Can you improve upon communication methods to make decision-making more fluid or easier for him?

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW!

1. Consider the number of choices the person you support makes on a given day. What you can do to increase independent choice-making opportunities?
2. Be sure that communication supports are always available, so the individual may initiate choice-making at any time. Introduce choices with consideration for the individual's current abilities or the situation at hand.
3. Identify the categories where the individual can become more independent. Share these with the individual as well as in meetings with your supervisor or team.