

Making a decision, one step at a time

One of the most important aspects of caregiving is the responsibility of making decisions. Daily life being continually governed by change: change in behavior, change of appointments, change of caregiver, change of counsellor, change of mood, change of medication, etc. Decision-making can cause tension and discomfort, especially when the possible consequences are unknown.

If decision making causes stress, tension or a feeling of being overwhelmed by events, it may be useful to take time to analyze the situation to preserve energy and health.

Gabriel is at the end of his university studies, his internship supervisor offered him the chance to complete his studies abroad. This would open doors for him in his field and facilitate his entry into the job market. However, he is the caregiver for his younger brother, who is living the after-effects of a severe head trauma. Thanks to their cohabitation and Gabriel's support, her brother is able to live a stimulating and fulfilling life. It took several months of compromise to achieve this balance. Now he has to make a decision that may well require a lot of adjustment.



Step 1: Establish a picture of the decision to be made

- Identify the people concerned;
- What deadlines need to be met?
- Gather all known elements of the situation, constraints, facilitators, details.

WHO+WHEN+WHAT = Portrait of the situation

Step 2 : Imagine different options



- In various work environments, the term "brainstorm" is used when it's time to consider many aspects of a new project or challenge. During this storm of ideas, which can be experienced alone or as part of a team, people are invited to name and write down every idea that comes to mind even those that seem far-fetched. This way of working allows the person to use creative potential and access to different perspectives.

- Make a storm of ideas and then sort out the different elements of the decision. Rapidly with the picture of the situation drawn in step 1 in mind, the caregiver will be able to build an action plan to consider a decision.

~~Taking my brother abroad? Finding a place to live? a supervised apartment? Pay for home help ask Marie. let him live in the apartment and install cameras! Help from a distance/ someone in the family could become his caregiver temporarily, forever? someone unknown, but qualified? Who? Refuse and do my internship here. postpone my internship a session? Clone myself.~~

Making a decision, one step at a time

Step 3: Get to know your value system

Of course, all decisions are made according to one's own value system. It's what defines us as human beings. It's a system that changes and adapts throughout life, in response to experience, learning and present realities.

Here are just a few examples of our values: creativity, education, empowerment, health, fun, family, success, liberty.

Step 4 : Measuring feasibility

This stage may require consultation with one or more professionals, family members or other caregivers to gather accurate, relevant and verified information. You should therefore allow more or less time depending on the type of information required or to be validated and the number of options selected for the action plan.

For example,

Gabriel got in touch with his aunt to ask if she could put his brother up for the duration of his study trip. He then discussed the situation with his brother's counsellor, who offered to accompany them every step of the way of the transition.

Step 5 : Note the positive and negative impacts of different options

One of the challenges of making a decision is the desire to choose the PERFECT option, one that satisfies all concerned. However, it's rarely possible to achieve this ideal.



The decision-making process itself can be itself beneficial:

- Reclaiming power over your life, whatever the outcome whatever the constraints;
- Acquire new knowledge;
- Develop skills that will be useful in other situations;
- Be proud of yourself!

Step 6: Making a decision

- Remember that it's a process in perpetual motion. It's possible and normal to go back on your decision if new elements come to light;
- Give yourself the right to make a mistake, or remember that you made the best decision with the information and knowledge available at the time.