

**Learn the Basics, Learn the Process,
Apply What You Learn:**

Service Coordination Orientation and Training Curriculum



**Southern California
Training and Information Group
(1999)**

**Learn the Basics, Learn the Process,
Apply What You Learn:
Service Coordination
Orientation and Training
Curriculum**

Developed for the
**Southern California
Training and Information Group**

a Standing Committee of the
**Southern California
Conference of Regional Center Directors**

**c/o Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center
3440 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 400
Los Angeles, CA 90010
(213) 383-1300
FAX 383-6526**

by
**Allen, Shea & Associates
and Rhonda Mayer**

**with revisions by Donna Schwann
and Maureen Wilson**

1999

Learn the Process:

Facilitated Decision-Making

Purpose, Outcomes, Methods, Time, and Materials

Purpose: The purpose of this module is to assist the service coordinator in facilitating an individual or family in making an informed decision about services or supports or other concerns which affect their lives.

Objectives: Upon completion of this module, you should be able to:

- (1) Explain the meaning of facilitated decision-making.
- (2) Understand the role of the service coordinator in facilitated decision-making.
- (3) Demonstrate the basic process of facilitated communication.
- (4) Use the basic process for assessing risky decision-making.

Method:

- (1) Group presentation and discussion or self-directed review of *Facilitated Decision-Making Overview*;
- (2) Self-directed reading of *Facilitated Decision-Making: Standing Back When You Want to Step Up*;
- (3) Group discussion or self-directed completion of *Suggested Activities*; and
- (4) Group discussion or self-directed completion of *Review*.

Time:

<i>PowerPoint or Overhead Presentation of Facilitated Decision-Making Overview</i>	15 minutes
<i>Facilitated Decision-Making: Standing Back When You Want to Step Up</i>	20 minutes
<i>Suggested Activities</i>	90 minutes
<i>Review</i>	20 minutes

Materials:

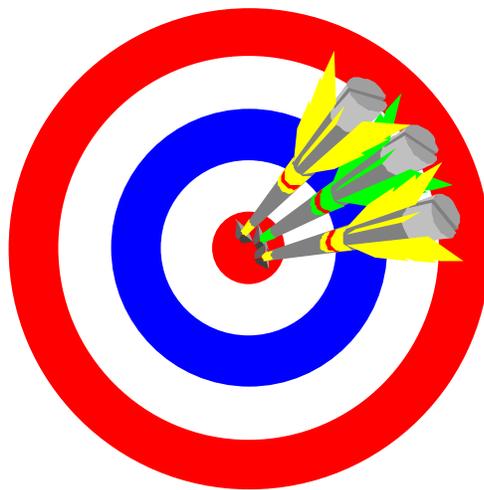
- LCD or Overhead Projector
- PowerPoint Presentation or hard copy Overheads of *Facilitated Decision-Making Overview*;
- *Learn the Process - Facilitated Decision-Making*

Facilitated Decision-Making: Standing Back When You Want to Step Up

Introduction

As a service coordinator, you will be working with individuals and families making choices about where to live, with whom to live, where to work, and how, where and with whom to recreate, etc. Many of those choices will have potential risks as well as opportunities. So, you will often be faced with the responsibility of assisting individuals and families in making *fully informed* decisions. This is what is referred to as *facilitated decision-making*. That is, providing an individual or family with all of the information and support he or she needs to make an informed, healthy and safe decision.

Individuals with developmental disabilities are among the most vulnerable people in our society. Without sufficient experience, we cannot expect individuals to make meaningful decisions with minimal risks unless we facilitate the process with support in identifying and understanding the potential risks.



Facilitated Decision-Making

The Role of the Service Coordinator

The service coordinator is often a key person in the support network for an individual with a developmental disability or his or her family. As the coordinator of services and supports, you will interact with a variety of people who make up an individual's informal and formal network of support - family, friends, neighbors, and support staff. A critical aspect of your job is to help all these people understand how they can support someone in evaluating the risks in the decision-making process.

What is Facilitation?

To reiterate from a previous module, facilitation is about assisting others, individually or in groups. Facilitating is not therapy, not about fixing others, not even about liking others. Rather, it is about acceptance, honor, and respect. You may find, of course, that the behaviors, values, and beliefs of some people are so *out of sync* with your own that someone else should facilitate for them. That's to be expected.

By being present, and listening actively to an individual or family, we gain some understanding of that person's world. Good facilitators try to avoid projection, interpretation, and giving advice or their opinion . . . unless requested. Facilitating another person is about listening, asking questions, and making suggestions (interventions) that lead to insight, resolve, connections, and actions.

Dale Hunter and his associates express the idea this way:

"Facilitating a person is about empowering him or her to:

Fulfill his or her dreams;

Create something new;

Have something happen that will make a difference in his or her own life and in their world;

Catch his or her own patterns; and

Identify what he or she wants to happen next."

Tips on Facilitative Communication*

As your use of facilitative methods and effective communication increases, individuals will learn how to think about their options, make decisions, identify their choices, and find their own solutions. Rather than giving advice, answers, or solutions, a conversational method can be used to guide the individual or family as he or she thinks through the situation, considering various possibilities and identifying some problem-solving steps.

* This section is adapted from **Preference Based Planning . . .** (see References in *Technical Assistance*)

Facilitated Decision-Making

For example, talk through the situation and ask questions about what he or she might do, or what might happen next, such as:

I'm wondering what you might want to do in this situation?

What do you see as being the next step?

I'm wondering what might be a good way to begin?

Avoid giving advice, and instead assist the individual or family in doing their own thinking. Options can be presented in a neutral manner. For example, if someone is presented with an opportunity to take a new, more exciting job, but it means a reduction in pay, you might say, *I know of persons who choose jobs that they like, even with less pay, because the job means so much to them. I also know other people who go for the job that pays the most. It depends on what's most important to the person making the decision.*

When someone is presented with two choices, you can say, *Here's what I do when I have to make a decision between two good choices: make a list of the positive and negative things about each choice. Then I compare the two lists. It helps me to write everything down so I can see the whole picture. Would you like to try that?* When you feel a need to offer advice, own it as your opinion and suggest that (s)he might want to ask others for their opinion also. Rather than advocating for solutions without adequate information, say *I'm not sure, I need to get more information, or This seems like an open-ended question.*

When the person is anxious about making a decision, and each option is a good one, you might want to say, *As I see it, either choice is a good one; you win with either one. You may want to consider taking your time in making this decision, if you don't need to decide right now.*

In situations where a decision is necessary, role playing also can be helpful. *Right now, if you were to decide, what would your decision be? What would you do?* Or you could say, *You may want to set a future date (soon) as a goal for making your decision.*

Offer assistance in clarifying and sorting out issues one at a time. Lists or diagrams can be used to keep track of various consequences or results of decisions. Always check out his or her view of the situation; you may also want to explain how you see the situation, checking to see if he or she understands your interpretation.

Continue to take responsibility for your own thoughts and ideas by using "I" messages (*I'm curious, I wonder, I think*). Eliminate "We" messages, such as *We'll work on your goals. We can solve the problem. We'll go turn in your job application.* Also continue to credit and support each person's efforts. *I support people in finding, obtaining, and keeping their jobs, rather than I place people in jobs, or I help people find job placements.*

Whenever possible, have the individual or family initiate the business at hand, rather than using your agenda as the starting point for working together. You can ask, *I'd like to check in with you regarding your plans for . . .*

Facilitated Decision-Making

Facilitative Communication

IS

Trusting that others CAN

Accepting others as they are

Building on personal strengths and skills

Listening and seeking

Kind, respectful, discreet

Inviting, encouraging, light, enjoyable

Cultivating self-determination
and self-direction, assisting

“Being there for” (in the wings,
behind the scenes), “doing with”
only when invited

Checking things out

Crediting

Letting go

Giving space, waiting, backing off

Owning my part of the interaction “I”
messages, checking:

I’m wondering ...

I’m curious ...

I trust ...

I’d like to hear ...

If you’d like my opinion/input, feedback, I’ll give it to you.

IS NOT

Fearing that others CAN NOT

Trying to fix or change them

Focusing on deficits, mistakes

Knowing, advising, monopolizing

Demanding, punishing, directive, patronizing

Requiring, grim, solemn, taking things too
seriously

Worrying, protecting

Doing for, thinking for, speaking for others

Second guessing

Blaming

Holding on, directing, protecting, worrying

Wanting it to be a certain way, having
expectations, pushy, demanding, angry

Controlling, not owning my part of the
interaction. “You, We” messages, questions,
directives, denial, avoidance

By role playing, individuals can develop confidence in obtaining information over the phone and conducting their own business. Making a list or script ahead of time can be helpful. A speaker-phone can be used to give support to someone as they conduct their own business on the phone. The facilitator records the information while the person speaks, and offers cues to the person without it being obvious to the person called.

Refer communication directly to the individual, if anyone attempts to speak through you or asks you for an someone's opinion when he or she is present. During a conference call, if a question is directed to you, say, *I think that _____ can answer that better than I can.*

Supporting the Decision-Making of Sons and Daughters

When working with a family as a facilitator of a son and daughter, it's important to create an atmosphere of trust and one which welcomes questions and input. Be supportive, and thank parents for voicing concerns about things they're wondering about, are unsure of, or about which they need more information. You may need to remind them of the importance of teaching a son or daughter to advocate for him or herself.

It's also important to realize that parents are at differing stages of awareness about the abilities of their children and the best way to support independence. Be patient with any skepticism regarding a son or daughter's ability to be self-directing.

Rather than creating dependence on you for answers, reinforce the parents' capacities to work with their sons and daughters to solve problems. Your role is to facilitate, provide learning experiences, and support discovery of their own solutions. You may choose to assume the role of a resource person. Whenever possible, help parents create a support system for problem solving, and refer people to appropriate contacts as needed. And remember, communication is the most important ingredient for the successful facilitation of decision-making with families as well as individuals.

Risky Business

Even after your best efforts at facilitated decision-making, individuals will make what appears to be a risky decision. In those situations, a series of questions should be asked to determine if some type of intervention may be necessary. These questions should be asked at a *risk evaluation* meeting which involves all who know and care about the individual. They should also be asked informally whenever the service coordinator and other support people interact with the individual.

Regulations and oversight cannot take the place of common sense and good judgment. The individuals and families we serve will sometimes need our support to make decisions which do not cause harm. We must not fall prey to what Clarence Sundram terms *professional ambivalence*, but we must be willing to share responsibility for decision making with individuals when such a partnership is necessary and appropriate.

Facilitated Decision-Making

Examples of Facilitative Statements

I'm wondering what you think about _____.

I'd like to hear what your ideas are.

I have some ideas about _____ if you'd like to hear them, let me know.

That's one idea ... and wait, I'm wondering what other ideas there are? Can you think of other ideas you might try?

If I can be of assistance in your thinking/problem solving about this, let me know.

I wonder what your thoughts are on this.

I could tell you what I would do in that situation, if you're interested.

I'm wondering if you can think of someone who could help you with this situation.

I'm wondering if you think you might need help in this situation.

I'm wondering if you want some help with this.

What kind of help do you think you need?

I'm wondering what choices/options you see for yourself in this situation.

I disagree with you on this.

I disagree with you at this time.

I don't see it the same way you do, but I respect your opinion.

How will you begin?

I'd like to know what part of this you think you can handle yourself, and what part you think you'll need help with.

I notice that you like (enjoy, appreciate, focus on, seek out, buy, prefer)

It might not be my choice, but it may work for you.

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Assessment for Risky Decisions*

(1) What is the person's history of decision-making?

- previous experience or practice in exercising autonomy and rights
- ability to learn from natural consequences of poor decision making

(2) What are the possible long- and short-term consequences associated with poor decision making? (What is the worst that could happen?)

- death
- exploitation
- illness, injury
- isolation, rejection by others
- involvement with law
- substandard living conditions
- financial difficulties
- lack of enriching experiences

(3) What are the possible long and short term consequences of increased direction and control by others?

- decreased confidence or self-esteem
- likelihood of increased dependence on staff
- improvement in the person's quality of life
- possibility of person refusing to accept services and supports. If this is likely, the following issues should be reviewed:
 - a. Under current circumstances, how is the person benefiting from the agency or service coordinator's involvement?
 - b. What could be the impact of terminating services if the individual refuses our increased involvement?
 - c. Does the individual require protective measures to be taken (e.g., guardianship, protective placement, other?)

(4) What are the trade-offs of continuing the current situation?

(5) Is the person sufficiently assertive to advocate for his/her rights? Is there the presence of an advocate, family member, friend, or guardian to represent the person's interests? If not, should we locate such a person?

(6) Should more control and direction be provided? If yes, describe the proposed support which causes the least intrusion while adequately protecting the individual. Do not be overly intrusive; be creative.

* Adapted from Community Living (Madison, WI)

Facilitated Decision-Making

4. What is and is not facilitation?

5. What are some examples of what is facilitative communication?

Facilitated Decision-Making

(4) What are the trade-offs of continuing the current situation?

(5) Is the person sufficiently assertive to advocate for his/her rights?

(6) Should more control and direction be provided?

7) What will you say to Javier? to his family?

Facilitated Decision-Making
