What is decision-making?

All of us make dozens of decisions every day, from what to wear, to what to have for lunch, to how to use our spare time in the evening.

Less frequently, we make bigger decisions with bigger consequences, like buying a new car, or whether to start, or finish, a relationship.

Making our own decisions is fundamental to being an adult. Our right to make our own decisions is enshrined in UK laws.

Even though the decisions we make about our own lives are ours alone to take, we often ask for help as part of the process. This could be a shop assistant, a friend, or a work colleague. We might look for technical knowledge from a specialist. Sometimes we don't need advice, we need someone to encourage us to make the decision our gut is telling us to make.

Activity 1

Purpose: This activity aims to get you to start thinking about your current understanding of decision-making.

Activity

Reflect and take notes on:

- How do you make your own decisions in everyday life and what does this mean to you?

Need some help?

Think about:

- The types of decisions you make in everyday life and how you go about making those decisions, for example what to have for lunch, or planning your next holiday.
- What you need to help you make these decisions, for example the types of information and advice you need.
- How important it is for you to be able to make your own decisions and what the benefits are of being able to do this.

Activity 2

Purpose: The purpose of this activity is to explore:

- The decision-making experiences of victim/survivors with learning disabilities
- How these compare to other women's experiences
- The effects of making decisions *for* women, instead of *with* them.
- What decision-making practice looks like in your organisation right now.

Activity

First, read what women with learning disabilities say about their experiences of decision-making *(https://equallysafe.scld.org.uk/toolkit/think-decision-making-6/women-with-learning-disabilities-experiences-of-decision-making-21/)* .

Now reflect and take notes on:

- Any experiences in the lives of someone you know or have worked with, that are like the ones you have just read about?
- How you currently work with women to make decisions.
- How you currently work with women with learning disabilities to make decisions.

Need some help?

Think about:

- A time when someone you know or have worked with (for example a victim/survivor of coercive control), had a decision(s) made *for* them instead of *with* them.
- What the effects of this could be on their thoughts, feelings, behaviour and level of engagement and trust.
- How you have felt, or would feel, if other people made decisions for you.
- How you support women with and without learning disabilities to make decisions about their lives. Is this any different and why?