

step 4

making **sound** **decisions**

Not being able
to speak
does not mean
I have nothing
to say.

KIRSTEEN MAIN

My Aroha

Andrew's story was submitted by his mother, Elizabeth Bloomfield. Her son probably had the first Aroha/Microboard in Ontario. They chose the word Aroha because it's apparently the Maori word for love...which sums it up perfectly.

Quoted by permission.

These are Andrew's words:

My Aroha, the legal core of my circle of friends, makes me feel secure for the future. I know my future is safer when my Aroha will be in charge with me. We started my Aroha in early 2002 after I told my parents and circle of friends about some scary dreams in which I was left alone when my parents die. I was concerned about my future security; and needed to know my means of support and that there is a safety system. My parents were glad that I could express my fears and that I wanted to be involved in planning for the future. So we found ways to set up my Aroha, which is a great comfort to me, now and for the future.

Being able to express myself and be listened to and believed is the biggest factor in my sense of security. I get insecure when I can't communicate with people. I don't like to be forced to talk if I am not ready. The Bridges group helps me feel secure to talk with others who feel the same way. Having my communication device helps me feel secure. The ways I communicate

are numerous. If people are not tuned in to my communication, I am not secure. I want people to think I have something to say worth hearing, not just to talk and be heard. I don't feel secure if people don't believe I can communicate my own thoughts. People need to continue to talk to me about everything. I like people to talk to me, not just to people with me. I want to know the details, so always share with me. I don't like it when people talk away from me. I need people to realize that **communication among everyone in my life is most important in my feeling secure.**

How important are safety and security to me? Some people might want more freedom, even to make mistakes and run risks. How to have more freedom and avoid risks? Some people might say I have to live with my choices, even if I make these choices without understanding all the consequences. What do I think about that?
I am as free as I want to be.

step 4

Making Sound Decisions

When you get right down to it, worrying about the safety and security of our family member is a paradox. On the one hand, we want to protect them from discrimination, exploitation, abuse, neglect, and injury. On the other hand, we want them to have a good life: a life where they enjoy themselves, get to try new things, a life where their choices are respected. We want to teach our family member how to survive and work through adversity. We want them to learn from their mistakes, as all of us must. We want people to recognize their ability to make decisions and to support them to make sound decisions. This kind of self-determination can give life meaning.

Do not see me
as your client.

I am your
fellow citizen.

See me as
your neighbour.

Help me learn
what I want
to know.

NORMAN KUNC

When our children are young, we make the important decisions on their behalf. When they reach the often complex and challenging time of adolescence, however, it is necessary to start thinking about meaningful ways to include them in the decisions that will impact their future lives.

It's a delicate balancing act faced by families the world over - keeping our family members safe while at the same time respecting their choices. Make no mistake about it. This balancing act is a tough challenge. Families find it difficult. So do service providers. So does government and its institutions.

This step will guide you through the ways you and your family member can create a balance between safety and choice. We introduce the concept of supported decision-making. We also describe the types of powers of attorney documents available to your family member.

It starts with choice

A good life includes honouring the choices of our family member. This means recognizing their tastes, preferences, and values; it also means acknowledging our family member's ability to discriminate, to select, and to choose. We know how determined our family member can be to express their approval or disapproval. We know they often are aware of their limitations and exercise prudent judgment in the face of it. We know they have views and opinions on a variety of topics. Unfortunately, not everyone is aware, understands or accepts the capability of our family member.

The assumption of others that our family members don't have opinions or cannot make decisions is an additional hindrance. This can lead to ignoring their wishes and eventually making all decisions, big and small, on their behalf.

We want the people involved with our family member to see what we see: a person capable of making their intentions known. We want the people in their lives to be patient, to be willing to listen, and to watch, and if necessary to be willing to learn our family member's unique and perhaps non-verbal communication style. We know all behaviour is a form of communication and we want our family member surrounded by people who will take the time to search for that meaning.

We are wary of people who won't try to learn how our family member expresses themselves, who are too busy, or who ignore—and perhaps worse—think they know what is best for them.

After recognizing their ability to make decisions, we can focus on assisting our family member in making choices. This may mean, in certain circumstances, speaking or making decisions on their behalf. We may do this informally when we set up a joint bank account or when we accompany them to a medical appointment.

We believe in nurturing the decision-making ability of our family member rather than giving someone else the power to make decisions on their behalf. The decision-making ability of our family member can be nurtured by:

- Respecting their inherent decision-making ability
- Enabling their own, authentic decision-making voice
- Presenting them with genuine choices
- Helping them to sort out and understand the options, and
- Supporting them in making the actual decision.

Many people with disabilities are offered few choices in their lives. Instead, they are treated as an object to whom things are done. They become passive and submissive. When we surround them with people who respect their capacity to make decisions, we also create the conditions for our family

member to become a self-advocate. This reduces the risk of exploitation, neglect, and abuse. Ultimately our family members are safer when they can communicate for themselves.

Is offering choice too risky?	Take Tim's situation, for example. When we first heard about Tim, his support workers made all his decisions. They decided what he should wear, what he should do during the day, what time he should have dinner, and so on. These decisions were based on what suited his supporter workers schedule. Tim was never consulted. For instance, Tim loved country music, but his support workers didn't care for it, so he never had the opportunity to listen to the country music station.
How big a risk are you prepared to take?	Over time, Tim retreated so far into the background of his own life that he might as well have been invisible. Fortunately, Tim's family eventually saw what was happening. As his Circle of Support developed, so did the relationship between Tim and his supporters. Luckily new supporter workers were hired based on their willingness to learn Tim's communication style. Now they listen to country music together.
Can you balance safety with choice?	Change is a constant. It is hard to predict what we or our family member will have to adjust to, and what critical decisions will have to be made in the future. We can make educated guesses about some of the areas we want protected for our family member but there are no guarantees. Rather than wasting energy on trying to control the uncontrollable, we suggest preparing for any eventuality by providing your family member with the best possible people to assist them in making their own decisions.
Who do you trust?	

Supported decision-making for your family member means:

- They actively participate
- Their views are sought and taken into consideration
- They are surrounded by caring, knowledgeable, trustworthy people who can assist with their decision-making and communicate their decisions

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- Their needs are the primary consideration, not the needs of supporters or other staff
 - The focus is on their abilities and wishes
 - All their choices and options are considered
 - Their tastes, preferences, motives, and ability to discriminate are taken seriously
 - Their risks, failures, and mistakes are recognized as learning opportunities.

Choice is like
a muscle:
if not
exercised,
it will atrophy.

Supported decision-making

Supported decision-making is how most people make decisions. We face a dilemma, look at the options, gather information, talk to people, and ask for support.

To ensure good decision-making for your family member who has a disability, we suggest you make the concept of supported decision-making the basis of your approach.

1. Do everything you can to enhance and validate the role of family, friends, and supporters as advocates and advisors to the decisions the family member you support makes.
2. Identify and use the existing advocacy system for people with disabilities.

Ensuring people's safety while honouring their choices can be a challenging task, undertaken with genuine care.

The secret of good decision-making

Have you ever made a bad decision or a decision you regretted? Have you ever changed your mind?

You are not alone. Some of the poor decisions we have made are minor, some are major, and we would like to take them back. The same is true and will be true for our family members, all of them, including those with disabilities. Decision-making means taking risks, understanding consequences, learning from mistakes, and trying again.

Progress
always starts
with bold
choices.

JANE JACOBS

Relationships are the foundation of sound decision-making

By now it should come as no surprise that relationships and Circles of Support have additional benefits—they enable good decision-making and assist to protect and keep your family member safe.

The first order of business, therefore, is to consolidate your family member's friends and supporters into a network, or what we call a Circle of Support. Members of this Circle can monitor the services, support and programs your family member receives; they can also advocate to maintain the quality of those services and programs.

Circle of Support members are often more than willing to support good financial, health, and personal care decision-making for your family member.

Should I consider legal guardianship?

Traditional legal guardianship permits another person to take over the affairs and decision-making for an adult who has been found to be incapable of making their own decisions. There are two types of guardians:

- **Guardian of Property:** authority to make decisions related to a person's property (for example their banking, finances and real property), and
- **Guardian of the Person:** authority to make personal care decision, including those related health care matters.

A good life
includes
honouring the
choices of
our family
member.

Reservations about guardianship:

1. Most guardianship orders are blunt instruments. Even though adults may only need help in certain areas of decision-making, guardianship orders are not easily tailored. All a person's financial and personal decision-making power may be removed. The adult can no longer assist with the decision-making process. In the eyes of the law, they are no longer a capable person.
2. Obtaining a guardianship order, especially with regards to the person, is costly, intrusive, and time-consuming.
3. Guardianship doesn't allow for joint or supported decision-making. It's an all or nothing proposition.
4. People with intellectual impairments and other noticeable differences are usually presumed to be incapable which makes it even tougher to assert their capability.

The appointment of a guardian involves the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee (OPGT).

Few people with disabilities will ever need guardianship. In the past, some parents applied to the courts to become guardian of their adult child (over 18 years) assuming this would give them enhanced status when dealing with government or service providers. This proved frustrating and costly without providing any more influence or authority.

For all these reasons, guardianship for most people should only be considered as a last resort and only pursued if necessary.

Types of decision-making

As you've no doubt learned by now, we strongly advocate that—whenever and wherever possible—your family member participates meaningfully in the decisions that affect their own lives. How your family member participates will vary from family to family. One thing is clear: they can't participate if they are not involved in the process.

There are situations, however, where it is in the best interest of your family member, your family, and your friends to create a more formal—and legally recognized—decision-making tool.

There are three broad areas of decision-making that affect your family member's life:

1. Financial Decisions
2. Health/Medical Decisions
3. Personal Care Decisions

Circles of Support are critical to each. Combined with other non-legal options, they offer further assurance that decisions will be made that protect and enhance the quality of life of your family member.

1. FINANCIAL DECISIONS There are a number of legal and non-legal options to protect your family member's financial assets, prevent exploitation, negligence or impulsive purchases, and to ensure good financial decision-making.

First, a Continuing Power of Attorney for Property may be useful. A Continuing Power of Attorney is a written document that allows a person (the Grantor: the person authorizing others to act on their behalf) to authorize someone else to make financial decisions on their behalf. Keep in mind that such authority can be effective from the date of signing or upon a finding of the Grantor's incapacity to manage property. Ensure that you speak with your lawyer about this option. Also, note that the Grantor may revoke this Continuing Power of Attorney for Property at any time as long as they are capable of doing so.

A person can make a Continuing Power of Attorney for Property if they meet certain legal requirements related to the understanding of their assets and appreciating that the people they appoint may make mistakes or misuse their authority. You can refer to section 8(1) of the Substitute Decisions Act for a complete list of the capacity requirements related to making a Continuing Power of Attorney for Property.

Written by Al Etmanski, Author of *Safe & Secure*

Diving

When I wrote this fictional meditation, I had not yet read Jean-Dominique Bauby's extraordinary book *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*. His story is better known now as a result of the movie of the same name. At the age of 45, French journalist Bauby suffered a massive stroke that left him without speech and movement. He was, as he says, "like a mind in a jar." Patiently, letter by letter, Bauby tells his story, using one eyelid to signal at what point in the chorus line of letters his friend is to stop transcribing. Bauby's reality is bright, vivid, and compelling. What would you do in a similar situation? You are heading to the grocery store on a sunny Saturday morning. You are a careful driver but your mind is elsewhere—on automatic pilot. Suddenly an approaching car jumps lanes and heads towards you. In a terrifying instant your life changes. After the impact you lose consciousness. You wake up in the hospital. The pain is excruciating. You are unable to move your arms and legs. Then you discover you can't speak. A doctor and a nurse are hovering over you. They are asking a lot of questions. They want to know your blood type. You aren't able to respond. For one thing, you are in shock. For another, they aren't watching your facial gestures and you have no other way of communicating.

They are now explaining what needs to happen to you. No one seems to notice the fear in your eyes. You hear medical terms you don't understand. You're scared and all

alone. Where is your wife? Have they tried to reach her? Suddenly you are placed on a stretcher and rushed down the hallway into an elevator, then down another hallway and into an operating room. Your last thoughts before the anesthetic takes hold are of... Who would you think of? Your spouse, your children, your parents, your brothers and sisters, your friends? Or your lawyer, your mechanic, your dentist? You do survive. The hospital is crowded but they manage to find a semi-private room for you. And they locate your spouse. She comes in several hours after you return from surgery. She immediately understands your terror. You are covered with blood. The needle from the IV tube is already causing noticeable swelling and bruising. Your wife calls a nurse. They respond immediately. They are cooperative and friendly. They didn't expect you to wake up so soon. They were busy elsewhere. The IV tube is adjusted and they give you a warm sponge bath. Eventually you drift off to sleep, comforted by the presence of your wife. At least you are not alone.

When your wife and friends are around, you feel safer and your needs are met. They notice when you are uncomfortable. They do all the little things that make your stay tolerable.

On one occasion you had to contend with an inexperienced intern who insisted on giving you a needle in your arm even though he

couldn't find a sizable vein. You were helpless to protest. Your arm became a personal challenge to him. When a colleague from work arrived, it was bruised and bloodied. Within minutes he had your wife on the phone. She spoke to the charge nurse and a notation was made on your chart. It won't happen again, they promised. It doesn't.

What keeps you safe during your hospital stay? Is it hospital rules and regulations? Is it the professional training of medical staff? Is it the nurses and doctors? Or is it friends and family?

Friends and family remove the cloak of anonymity. With them you become a person again. It's not that professional paid care isn't important; it's just that you are more than the sum of your health needs. Make no mistake about it, this move from being an object of service to a real person depends on your relationships. Why would it be any different for people with disabilities? It isn't. However, we often make the error of assuming professional paid care is all that is necessary to keep people with disabilities safe and guarantee choice. Programs, professional supports, rules, and regulations have their limitations. Paid service should supplement—not supplant—good, old-fashioned human contact, warmth and love.

Trusts are another option used by families to protect the financial assets of their family member and to ensure the funds are used in their best interest. Step five explores this option in more detail.

Families may also consider opening joint bank accounts or purchasing property in joint title. Keep in mind there may be tax-related considerations as well as the potential impact on a person's ODSP. It is therefore strongly recommended that you seek legal advice prior to entering more complex ownership structures.

2. HEALTH/MEDICAL DECISION-MAKING You can divide this into emergency and non-emergency decision-making.

Families want assurance that their family member will receive medical treatment in the event of an emergency, especially if the health care practitioners are unable to obtain legal consent. You need not worry. Health care practitioners and hospitals in Ontario can—and do—provide emergency medical treatment when it is needed regardless of whether consent can be obtained.

For non-emergency health care, the experience is more varied. Many adults with disabilities enjoy a long-standing relationship with their family health care practitioner. They know each other's abilities and communication styles. In these situations, the capacity of the person who has a disability to give consent may not be an issue. The health care practitioner may be willing to take the time to give the individual the opportunity to express their wishes.

If the health care practitioner determines that your family is incapable of providing consent to treatment, this consent must be provided by a substitute decision-maker ("SDM"). An SDM may be identified by way of a formal appointment including a guardianship order from the Consent and Capacity Board or a Power of Attorney for Personal Care.

If there is no formal appointment in place, there is provision in the Health Care Consent Act that allows a next of kin to act as a person's SDM.

Because the
heart is bigger
than trouble.
And the heart
is bigger
than doubt.
But the heart
sometimes
needs a little
help to figure
things out.

CONNIE KALDOR

The decision-making hierarchy for health care matters is as follows:

- Guardian of the Person
- Attorney for Personal Care
- Representative appointed by the Consent and Capacity Board
- Spouse, including common law and same-sex partner
- Child or parent
- Parent who only has right of access (typically a parent with visitation rights only)
- Brother or Sister
- Another relative by birth, marriage or adoption

The substitute decision-maker must be at least 16 years old, capable, and available and willing to assume the responsibility of giving or refusing consent.

If no family member qualifies, then the Public Guardian and Trustee has the power to give or refuse consent.

3. PERSONAL CARE DECISIONS This is an area of decision-making that is by far the most elusive because the forces are largely out of our control. Our family member will likely be dealing with paid caregivers or support workers or service providers and educators for the rest of their lives. These people will make daily decisions which will have a huge impact on our family member.

We can't predict the future of government funding for these critical supports and the repercussions on the quality of programs and services. We are pleased that regulations and policy set standards for service providers. And we acknowledge the value of accreditation and formal evaluation. But we know this doesn't go far enough. These tend to focus on broad system standards. They don't address the personal daily circumstances of each of our family members.

Monitoring and advocacy are natural extensions of parenting skills. While we are alive, we can engage with service providers and organizations. We know how important it is to maintain a relationship with them. We have a good idea of how much work this requires and how much time it takes. If there is a concern, we can do something about it. We can join an agency's Boards of Directors for example. As in other areas of decision-making, Circles of Support can offer additional options and resources for you to consider.

Powers of attorney

To ensure that your family member has someone they trust to help with personal care decisions (including health care matters), they may want to consider putting a Power of Attorney for Personal Care in place. They can do so if they know that the person they choose has a genuine concern for their welfare and they may need to make decisions on their behalf.

A Power of Attorney for Personal Care only comes into effect when a person is incapable of managing their own personal care. It is a good idea for anyone who is capable of completing a Power of Attorney for Personal Care to have one in place. This allows them (the Grantor) to appoint another person (or other people) to make personal care decisions on their behalf in situations where they are found incapable of doing so themselves. The people appointed must comply with the Grantor's wishes as expressed in their Power of Attorney for Personal Care.

Microboards™

A Microboard™ is comprised of a small group of family and friends who join with a person to create a not-for-profit organization. The sole purpose of this organization is to support your family member. They can provide a variety of supports, most importantly creating opportunities for relationships to flourish. Overall, Microboards allow people to achieve greater control over their personal support needs.

Microboards Ontario (www.microboardsontario.com) provides resources to assist people and families with creating a Microboard. It shares the following insight with respect to the potential benefits of Microboards:

- Helps to formalize a “Circle of Support/Network”.
- Expands the number of people in a person’s life.
- Supports the person to direct their life and make key decisions.
- Helps keep a person’s vision and dreams alive.
- Provides support for siblings or next generation of support.
- Reduces pressure on families/caregivers.
- Means a person/family is less likely to go into crisis because in the event of sudden change, there is a committed group of people there to continue to support them.

Vela Canada pioneered Microboards in British Columbia, and their popularity has spread with organizations championing Microboards in many countries around the world.

Summary of legal options

- A Continuing Power of Attorney for Property covers financial matters but not health and personal care decisions.
- A Power of Attorney for Personal Care: covers health and personal care decisions but not financial matters.
- A Guardian of Property and of the Person: has the authority to make financial, health, and personal care decisions on behalf of another person. Consider only as a last resort.

Written by Wendy Newbery, Parent

A Significant Building Block

When we began thinking about a Microboard, our biggest question was how to make the process meaningful for Evie, our daughter for whom the Microboard would function. I believe the attention that we paid to this part of our Microboard story is one of the most significant parts of the journey for all of us so far.

Four years before the Microboard became a reality, our Independent Facilitator, our family, and network began more intentional conversations (sometimes graphically facilitated) with Evie about the various people in her life and the roles that they play. It was made clear that mom and dad held many roles.

We moved from this understanding to a very practical conversation about how mom and dad would not always be able to play these roles because we would become too old to do so. Evie seemed to understand well that she would still need help with these things and that her Microboard would provide the help she needed.

This conversation was encapsulated in “Evie’s Microboard Statement” which she reads at the beginning of every Microboard meeting as a reminder to her and to us that her Microboard, now called Evie’s Good Life

Partners, is essential to her future health, safety, and security.

Of all the work we have done together, I think this conversation and the resulting statement are the most important pieces for all of us. The words we have used and written down will become the basis for future conversations but in the meantime, they help to ground us in our role as Evie’s Good Life Partners.

We are in our third year after incorporation, and, as Microboard Chair, I have been feeling some pressure about transitioning the Microboard from our original relationship-building phase to the role of a fully working board. While we can hold the pieces right now as Evie’s parents, we know that this will not always be so, and I feel some urgency to bring the board to action. I sit with many questions about how much to ask of others and how to move forward with our goal to become a true working Microboard. I shared these concerns with Laura, one of our daughter’s Microboard members, over a cup of tea.

Laura is a strong advocate for the “mother voice”. She reminded me that parents have the deepest understanding of their child, which is born both from necessity

and from the privilege of parenthood. While we can show Evie's Microboard members the practicalities of administering her life, the most significant insight happens when listening to Evie herself, and to family members who have been in relationship with her for her whole life.

After my chat with Laura, I was able to reaffirm my trust in the process of growing and evolving as a group with Evie's voice to guide us. In addition, I have come to prioritize knowledge sharing as it relates to the deeper understanding we have as mom and dad – the essence of who we understand Evie to be and what makes life work for her. I believe now that the gift of our parental story will be the most important gift we can offer to Evie and to her Microboard.

Choices

We suggest that you support your family member to make good decisions by asking yourself the following questions:

We have got to
put our human
spirit on the line
if we hope to
communicate with
others at all.
Maybe that
is when people
feel cared for,
when they feel
that sense
of human spirit.

MAGARET
SOMMERVILLE

- What choices do they have now?
- What experience do they have with decision-making?
- What decisions can they make independently?
- What decisions will they need help with?
- What informal arrangements can be made to assist with decision-making?

Conclusion: the secret to good decision-making

There is no magic to the task of keeping our family member safe while at the same time respecting their choices. A tilt in the direction of over protection could lead, at the extreme, to a barren existence. A tilt in the direction of complete autonomy could lead to abuse and exploitation. The secret is checks and balances.

And the best way to do that is by assembling the best people and resources. A Circle of Support—combined with control over the funding, and ongoing advocacy—is the best safety net we know.

Choosing a guardian for children under the age of 18

It is difficult to discuss who should take care of your children under the age of 18 should you die unexpectedly.

Unfortunately, it does happen, leaving the surviving children, remaining relatives, and friends in legal limbo. The courts become involved, and a judge makes a custody order. You cannot assume grandparents, godparents or other choices you think are obvious will automatically be given responsibility. More than 40 per cent of Canadian parents have not legally appointed a guardian for their

children. NOTE Contrary to popular belief, you cannot appoint a guardian for your adult children in your Will. See Step 5 for more details.

You must add a guardianship clause to your Will. One of the toughest decisions faced by parents is determining who to appoint as legal guardian of our minor children. To ease this emotionally difficult process and to prevent further upset, here are some suggestions to assist you in choosing a guardian:

- List your parental values, your aspirations for your children, as well as any religious, financial or cultural concerns;
- Choose the person who comes closest to your parenting style and who would guide your children the way you intend to guide them. A child's aunt or uncle is a common trusted choice, followed by close family friends. Trust in that person's judgment is paramount;
- Try to select someone close to your age rather than someone of your parent's generation. Your parents may be excellent grandparents, but they may not be able to manage another set of children, especially through the teenage years;
- Becoming a guardian adds additional financial as well as emotional responsibilities. In recognition of this, some parents take out a life insurance policy naming the guardian as beneficiary;
- Parents of other children with disabilities are a good source of advice. Because of their common bond, parents often choose each other as guardians.

References:

Substitute Decisions Act, 1992, S.O.1992, c. 30 s.8. <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/92s30>

Written by Carole, Parent

Natalie's Microboard Story

Our Microboard was created to provide Natalie an opportunity for her voice to be heard. What we didn't know was the scope it provided to us all. Her Microboard has gone beyond our expectations. It has provided Natalie with the security that her wants and needs will be met, and that she can live a long life in her own home.

Her Microboard has created our vision for Nat to come true. Our dreams for her are to live a fulfilled life in a community that embraces her, staff that truly are her friends and a place for her to be proud of.

The Microboard members are there to oversee Natalie's safety, health, struggles, accomplishments, budget and more. What we didn't expect was the deeper bond that they created with Natalie. Through this process of creating the Microboard, they got a better understanding of her. This created a more natural friendship with her.

As parents, we wish the best for our children. The Microboard was the final step to ensure that both our daughters live a life of their choosing. We have the comfort of knowing that long after we are gone, our youngest daughter will not have all the responsibilities with Natalie. Instead they can enjoy being sisters.

At the end of the day, I can rest my head knowing that everything will be fine.

The Microboard was the missing piece of our family puzzle.

Worksheet 9

Supported decision-making

Use this worksheet to organize key decision-making information, issues, and resources that affect the choices and safety of your family member with a disability.

Family members, including parents, do not automatically have the right to make decisions over a person's property even if that person has a disability. To grasp the different capacity and decision-making rules we can explore three main categories:

1. Property: refers to financial affairs, such as decisions related to banking, investments and real property, such as a house for example.
2. Personal care (non-health care related): refers to everyday decisions about nutrition, housing, clothing, hygiene and safety, etc.
3. Health care: are subject to specific rules found in the Health Care Consent Act. These decisions are treated differently from other personal care decisions.

Here are some questions to consider as you organize key decision-making information, issues, and resources that affect the choices and safety of your family member with a disability:

Generally:

Who would I trust to support my family member? _____

Who can assist my family member with expressing their will and preferences? _____

Property Related Decisions:

Does my family member have a Continuing Power of Attorney for Property in place? YES NO

Does my family member independently complete banking transactions? YES NO
(ie. online or in-person purchases)

Does my family member have an RDSP and is involved in its management? YES NO

Does my family member manage their own investments, including a bank account? YES NO

Does my family member own any real estate? YES NO

What provincial funding does my family member receive? _____

Personal care (non-health care related):

Does my family member have a Power of Attorney for Personal Care in place? YES NO

Who does my family member trust to support them in making everyday decisions about nutrition, housing, clothing, hygiene and safety? _____

What are my family member's favourite foods? Any strong dislikes, allergies? _____

Does my family member have any religious rites or preferences? YES NO _____

Does my family member have any preferences when it comes to support workers? YES NO

Health care:

Does my family member take any medication? If so, create a list. _____

Does my family member have any strong feelings regarding the indefinite use of life support? YES NO

Does my family member have any strong opinions about Long-Term Care? YES NO

Does my family member have any preferences when it comes to health care practitioners? YES NO
