

## Decision Making

Decision making is choosing between two or more options or courses of action. Sometimes there is clearly a correct choice, such as whether or not to visit an ill relative you are close to, but at other times there is no obvious correct choice.



In cases where there is no clear 'correct' choice, it can be very difficult and stressful to decide what to do. Some people might put off making decisions, or try to get others to make the decision for them. Some people will use easy but poorly thought out methods of decision making like flipping a coin.

While no-one can tell you what decision to make, there are steps you can take in order to make effective and well thought out decisions. These are:

- Stage One: Listing all possible solutions/options.
- Stage Two: Setting a time scale
- Stage Three: Information gathering.
- Stage Four: Weighing up the pros and cons of each course of

action.

- Stage Five: Making the decision.

### **Stage One:**

Make a list of all of the possible solutions or options in your decision. For example, your choices could be:

- Go to college
- Get a job
- Go to college and work part time

### **Stage Two**

In deciding how much time to make available for the decision making process, it helps to consider the following:



- How much time is available to spend on this decision?
- Is there a deadline for making a decision and what are the consequences of missing this deadline?
- Is there an advantage in making a quick decision?
- Will spending more time improve the quality of the decision?

For example, if you are considering going to college, there may be a

deadline by which you have to apply, so it is important to make a note of this so that you can make a decision by this deadline.

### **Stage Three**

Before trying to make your decision, it is important to gather all of the necessary information. For example, with regard to college you may want to look at what courses are available and attend an open day so that you can find out more about studying there, meet tutors and other students and discover what support is available.

As for jobs, you may want to consult local newspapers and job websites to see what kind of work you are able to get with your experience and qualifications. It may also be useful to speak to an Employment Advisor.

### **Stage Four**

Once you have gathered information on the options available to you, it can be helpful to make a list of reasons for and against each option. Try to think of as many reasons as possible. Consider asking trusted relatives or friends for their ideas too, although remember that they cannot make the decision for you.



Example:

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Image 3 courtesy of Stuart Miles at [FreeDigitalPhotos.net](http://FreeDigitalPhotos.net)  
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## Going to College

Pros	Cons
Gaining better qualifications and employment prospects	Will be earning no money, or only little money if I work part-time
A chance to study a subject I enjoy	Cost of tuition fees
Can still work part-time	Will have to delay leaving home due to costs
Meeting new people	

## Getting a job

Pros	Cons
Income	May be limited as to what work I can do as I lack qualifications
Can afford to leave home	Will probably only be able to find low-paid work without qualifications
Increased independence	My find it difficult to get a job
	I have no previous employment experience
	May not enjoy my job

## Stage Five

Once you have gathered all the information you can and made lists of pros and cons, it is time to use this information to make your decision.

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Remember to adhere to any deadlines.

If there are more pros than cons for one option, then this may be the best option to choose. If an option has a lot of cons, it may not be the best choice.

While this process will not make the decision for you, it will ensure that you have thought through and researched your options thoroughly and mean that any decision you make is well thought out.

Although no-one can make the decision on your behalf, seeking advice from appropriate professionals can be a good idea in helping you with the above stages and in making your final decision. Examples include Support Workers, Advocates, Benefits Advisors, Employment Advisors and Careers Advisors.