

Essential Skills : Professional Decision Making

Trawsnewid Addysg, Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education, Transforming Lives

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What are we learning?

By the end of the short session you will learn how to:

- Spot when different people want or need different things.
- Compare possible choices, including their benefits and problems.
- Choose a reasonable action based on the facts and workplace responsibilities.
- Explain a decision, including why another choice was not taken.

Central question: How do I make a good professional decision when different people need different things?

Every Day, We Make Decisions

The choices we make can affect our colleagues, customers and the people who use our services.

At work, we make decisions every day. Some are small, such as deciding which task to do first. Others are more important, such as what to do when we notice a mistake or when someone asks us for help.



A good professional decision is one we can explain and give a clear reason for.

Every Day, We Make Decisions

Being professional means thinking before we act.

We need to ask ourselves:

- What is happening?
- Who might be affected by my choice?
- What could happen next?
- Is this something I can decide, or should I ask for help?



Sometimes the quickest or easiest choice is not the best one.

Would You Do It?

You work in a community support service.
There is only one appointment left this afternoon.

Person A – Joyce - has been waiting for two weeks and has taken time off work to attend.
Person B – Jilly - has contacted the service today and says they need urgent help.
Your colleague asks: “Who should get the appointment?”

Choose one of the three actions – give your reasons, not just votes

Give the
appointment to
Person A

Give the
appointment to
Person B.

Check more
information
before deciding.

What Makes a Decision Difficult?

Making decisions at work can be difficult because different people may want different things. However, what someone wants is not always the same as what they need.

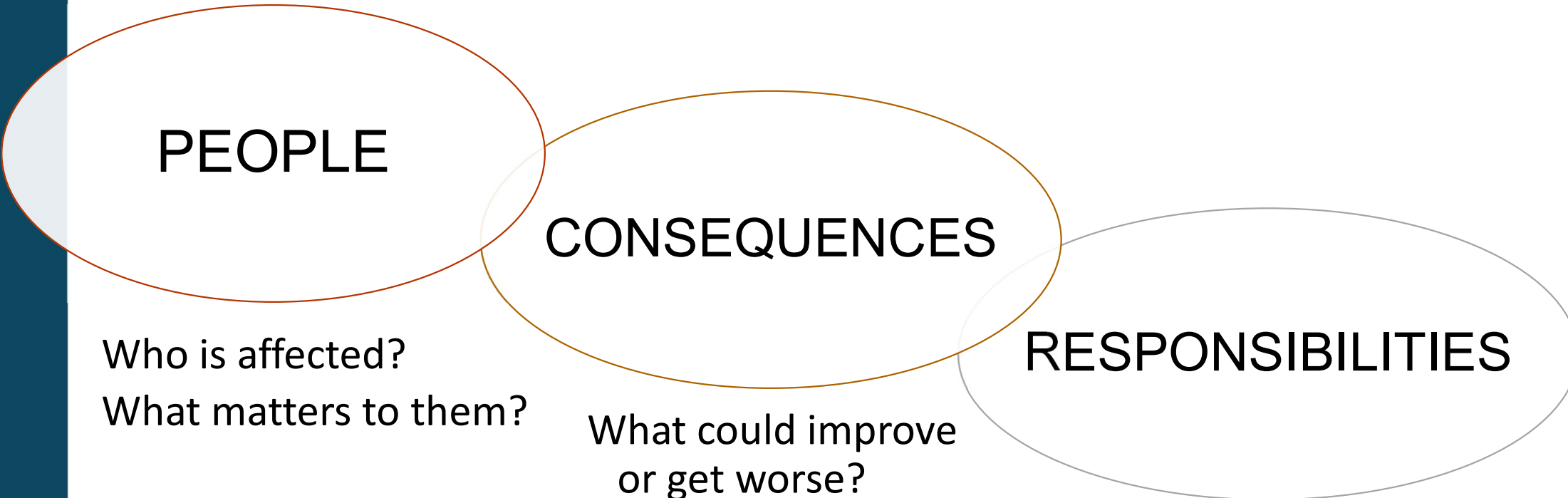
For example, a customer may want an answer straight away, but what they need is correct information.



We must also think about what the workplace is responsible for providing, such as a safe service, fair treatment and following the correct rules. A good professional decision means balancing what people want, what they need and what the organisation can and should provide.

What Makes a Decision Difficult?

Use three lenses to view your problem through:



PEOPLE

Who is affected?
What matters to them?

CONSEQUENCES

What could improve
or get worse?

RESPONSIBILITIES

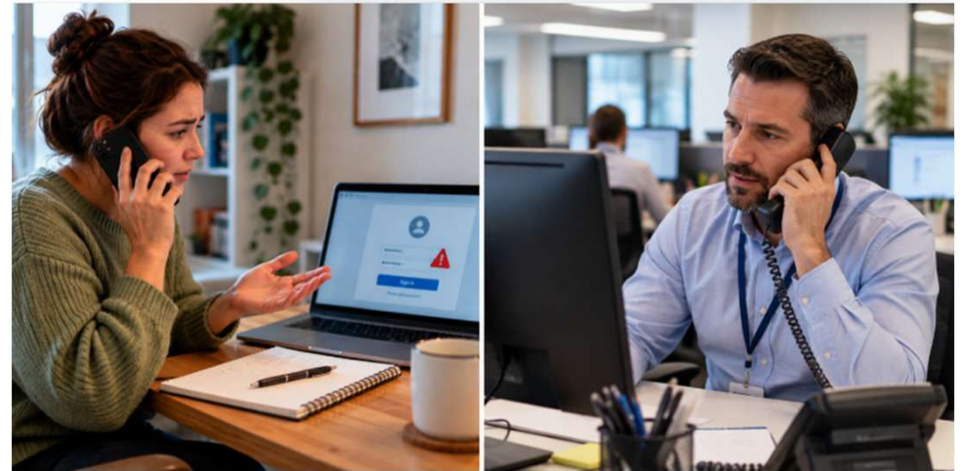
What rules, duties or
limits matter?

Example 1 – Customer spreadsheet

You work in an office. A colleague, that is working from home asks you to email a customer spreadsheet to their personal email account so they can work on it.

You suggest using the work OneDrive to access the document, but your colleague states that they are having issues with their log in details and cannot access their work email or Onedrive.

The colleague has worked at the company longer than you. What do you decide to do?



- Who are the people involved?
- What are the possible consequences?
- What responsibilities do you or the company have?

Example 2 — The Safety Check

You work in a warehouse that sends orders to shops.

- It is 4:15pm. A delivery lorry is due to leave at 4:30pm.
- Before the boxes are loaded, staff must check that the correct items have been packed and that nothing is damaged.

Your colleague Morgan says: “We're running late. Let's skip the final check today. I'm sure everything is fine.”

- Your supervisor is unavailable due to helping another team.



- Who are the people involved?
- What are the possible consequences?
- What responsibilities do you or the company have?

Example 3 – The disagreeing team



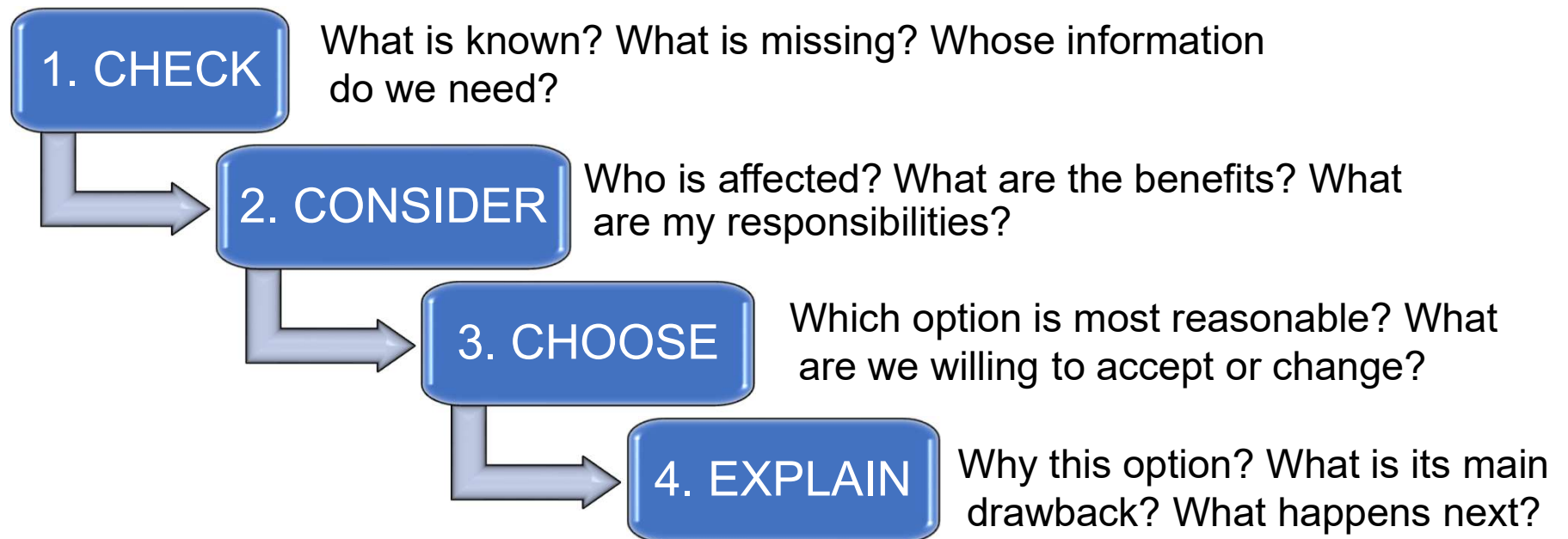
Amy needs to ensure her team meets their deadline, but two team members are arguing and not working collaboratively. How should Amy respond to the arguing staff?

- Who are the people involved?
- What are the possible consequences?
- What responsibilities do you or the company have?

The Four Questions: A Simple Decision Framework

Making decisions at work can sometimes be difficult. You may not have all the information, or you may be unsure what to do.

Using four simple steps can help you make a good decision.



Worked example: The Staff Training Session

A company has booked a training session for six employees. A major customer issue now needs attention at the same time. The manager suggests cancelling the training. However, the training is required before staff can use a new system next week.

1. CHECK

We know the customer issue needs attention, but the training is also important. We need to find out the urgency and whether the entire team is required to deal with it.

2. CONSIDER

Option A: Cancel the training.
Option B: Continue the training.
Option C: Split the team or change the training arrangements.

3. CHOOSE

Choose a reasonable action – option C – ask if a smaller team can deal with the customer issue while other attend the training.

4. EXPLAIN

We recommend checking whether we can split the team or rearrange part of the training. This could help us support the customer while preparing staff for the new system.

Workplace Decision Challenges

Scenario: The Customer Delivery Problem

Your company has promised a large customer delivery on Friday. A supplier delay means the full order will not be ready.

The team has three possible responses.

- Option A — Deliver part of the order on Friday
The customer receives some items on time, but the rest will arrive later.
- Option B — Pay for faster supply
The full order may arrive on time, but the company will face extra costs.
- Option C — Agree a new delivery date
The company avoids extra costs, but the customer may be disappointed or affected.



1. CHECK

2. CONSIDER

3. CHOOSE

4. EXPLAIN

What should you do?

A. Deliver part of the order on Friday

The customer receives some items on time, but the rest will arrive later.

B. Pay for faster supply

The full order may arrive on time, but the company will face extra costs.

C. Agree a new delivery date

The company avoids extra costs, but the customer may be disappointed or affected.



As a group, decide your choice and complete the sentence -
“We recommend _____ because _____. The main drawback is _____. Before we act, we need to check _____.”

Workplace Decision Challenges

IT System Update

You are a new manager of a wellbeing service.

- Your organisation needs to install an important update to an internal system due to hacking threats.
- The update is expected to improve security and reliability.
- The system is used by patient care, finance support and administration.
- Installing the update will require a planned period when the system is unavailable.

The team must recommend when and how to complete the update.



What should you do?

A. Update during the working day
IT staff are available to deal with problems, but other departments will lose access while they are working.

Option B — Update in the evening
Fewer employees will be using the system, but fewer IT staff are available and extra staffing may need approval.



Option C — Delay until the weekend
There may be less disruption, but the organisation will continue using the current system for longer.

Reflect – How confident do I feel?

My Decision-Making Confidence Check

- 1 - Not yet confident 2 - A little confident 3 - Quite confident 4 - Very confident

I can listen to people who want different things. Rate yourself 1, 2, 3 or 4

I can compare the good and bad points of different choices. - Rate yourself 1, 2, 3 or 4

I can make a recommendation even when no option is perfect. - Rate yourself 1, 2, 3 or 4

I can explain why I did not choose another option.. - Rate yourself 1, 2, 3 or 4

I can change my decision when I learn new information. - Rate yourself 1, 2, 3 or 4

Points to remember when making a decision.

People

Consequences

Responsibilities

Three professional decision questions to remember:

- What decision do we need to make?
- Who could be affected?
- Which option do we recommend?

My Professional Decision Checklist

Reflect of what you learnt and discussed today, think about how you will take this forward by completing the following sentences.

- When people want different things, I will...
- Before I decide what to do, I will check...
- I will think about how my choice could affect...
- I will compare options by looking at.....
- If someone questions my decision, I can say...



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See you next
week

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