

# Adult Day Self-Care Newsletter

August 2023

## Decisions, Decisions

Every day, we make many decisions—some small, some big. Do I hit the snooze button? Do I stop for coffee on my way to work? What do I do first? What do I do next? Should I say “yes” to that invitation or request? Do I call the doctor about my sore knee? Which of these job applicants should I hire? Some decisions are easy. Some are not. In Adult Day Centers, like other clinical settings, staff have to make multiple decisions throughout the workday. Many staff also are bombarded with critical decisions in their non-work lives. The people attending the Centers may no longer be able to make decisions for themselves, which places an additional burden on the staff and on the caregivers who support them at home. Both staff and at-home caregivers may benefit from information and guidance for making some of these decisions, and support for learning how to consider the needs and preferences of someone who can no longer express them.

## Healthcare Decision Support Aids

Some online or paper-and-pencil tools can help you walk through difficult decisions. Some are generic and some are specific to certain decisions like whether to move a loved one with dementia out of the home and into long-term care. Often, these tools include research evidence on different options, risks and benefits of each option, and worksheets that guide exploring feelings, values, and personal preferences.

The [Ottawa Hospital](#) offers a library of healthcare decision support aids that addresses many issues and health conditions, including dementia. Other resources are listed on the [Dartmouth Health](#) website.

Educational videos also are available. One is designed to prepare and educate [family members](#) who are responsible for health care decisions for people with advanced dementia. Another is part of a [training program](#) for service providers learning to coach someone through a life or health decision.



-----Decision Coins from Danforth Pewter-----

## Healthcare Provider Decision-Making

A recent article<sup>1</sup> suggests healthcare providers' ability to deliver kind and compassionate care may decline during a busy day or at the end of a long shift. Fatigue from hunger, multiple decisions, and difficult interactions with others (people served or colleagues ) may reduce empathy, flexibility, and self-control. Over time, this pattern may contribute to burnout. While the authors do not offer a solution, programs can take steps to encourage self-care, stress management, and collegial peer support.

<sup>1</sup>Schweitzer, Baumeister, et al. (2023, June). Self-control, limited willpower, and decision fatigue in healthcare settings. *Intl Med J.*

## What Research Says About Decision-Making

A growing interest in studying decision-making in psychology, economics, and other fields. Here are some of the researchers' conclusions:

**Choice is good.** People like to have a say in decisions that affect them. It helps us feel heard, valued, and in control. This is especially important in healthcare decisions.

**Too many options is a problem.** While we like choice, having too many alternatives is overwhelming. For someone with dementia, offer only two or three options.

**Information helps,** but it's easy these days to have too much information. The internet makes it easy to find things out, but it can be hard to sift the reliable and relevant details from the flood of fake news, advertising, and opinions.

**Fatigue impairs judgement.** When we're short on sleep, physically drained, or just at the end of a long day of other decisions, we may be unable to make wise and thoughtful choices. Self-care is important to be at your best.

**People are irrational.** We are easily influenced by our feelings, assumptions, and biases. That's not all bad. For many decisions, our values, feelings, and preferences are important. Exploring what matters to you can be critical when making a major decision by limiting options and identifying information needs.

**Deciding affects our viewpoint.** Once we make a decision, we tend to focus most on information that supports it and ignore what suggests another choice would have been better.

Deciding is a complex process, influenced by many factors. For big decisions, take time to gather information, explore your needs and values, and consider your biases.

## For More Information

Check out our past newsletter issue on Decision Fatigue ([April 2022](#)).

The *TED Radio Hour* podcast provides a great summary of [decision-making](#) with presentations by some experts on the topic. *March 20, 2017 show*

## Care2Caregivers Website

You can find the [Adult Day Resources pages](#) on our website through the drop-down menu in the Professional Resources section.

As always, you can access the Self-Care resources on our website for free. Use our NEW link:

**Self-Care for Professional Caregivers**  
<https://care2caregivers.com/professional-resources/self-care/>

### Upcoming Caregiver Education 2023

#### Preventing & Managing Caregiver Decision Fatigue

August 24, 2023 1:00pm  
Click [HERE](#) to register

#### Safety Issues for Caregivers

September 26, 2023 1:00pm  
Click [HERE](#) to register

#### Truth Telling & Memory Loss

October 25, 2023 1:00pm  
Click [HERE](#) to register

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visit our website [www.care2caregivers.com](http://www.care2caregivers.com) for information on caregiver support groups

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