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Informed Choices: Advocating for Your Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) in Clinical Settings

A Resource for Indigenous Women, Girls, Two-Spirit, Transgender and Gender-Diverse (IWG2STGD) People



What Is Informed Choice?

One of your rights as a patient navigating the health system is full access to information about your sexual and reproductive health, so that you can make informed choices. This includes understanding all your options when it comes to birth control, contraception, and family planning.

Informed choice is when you are given options for possible medical treatments and interventions, educated about the details, risks, benefits, and outcomes of each option, and then asked to choose the one that best fits your needs. Informed choice empowers the person seeking care to decide what happens to their body, giving control back to the individual in the care setting.

Why Is It Important?

In Canada, Indigenous communities face persistent challenges in SRH, encountering barriers like limited access, poor quality of care, and discrimination within the health care system¹. These legacies, alongside ongoing systemic discrimination, disproportionately hinder IWG2STGD people from seeking out SRH care².

Your right to make an informed choice is an important factor in ensuring your autonomy is respected and that you receive quality, culturally safe care in a clinical setting.

Getting a lot of information from a doctor or service provider doesn't necessarily mean that the information is used to make informed choices. Further, without a holistic understanding of the choices and their consequences, individuals can feel frustrated and disempowered.

How?

You are encouraged to seek out your support system, including Elders, family, friends, health care providers, or your hospital's Indigenous patient liaison officer, to guide you through the choices, so that you can ultimately decide on the best option for yourself.

You can also use our Informed Choice Decision-Making Tool, adapted from the Ottawa Personal Decision Guide, to break down the steps:

1. Horrill, T., McMillan, D. E., Schultz, A. S., and Thompson, G. (2018). Understanding access to healthcare among Indigenous peoples: A comparative analysis of biomedical and postcolonial perspectives. *Nursing inquiry*, 25(3), e12237.

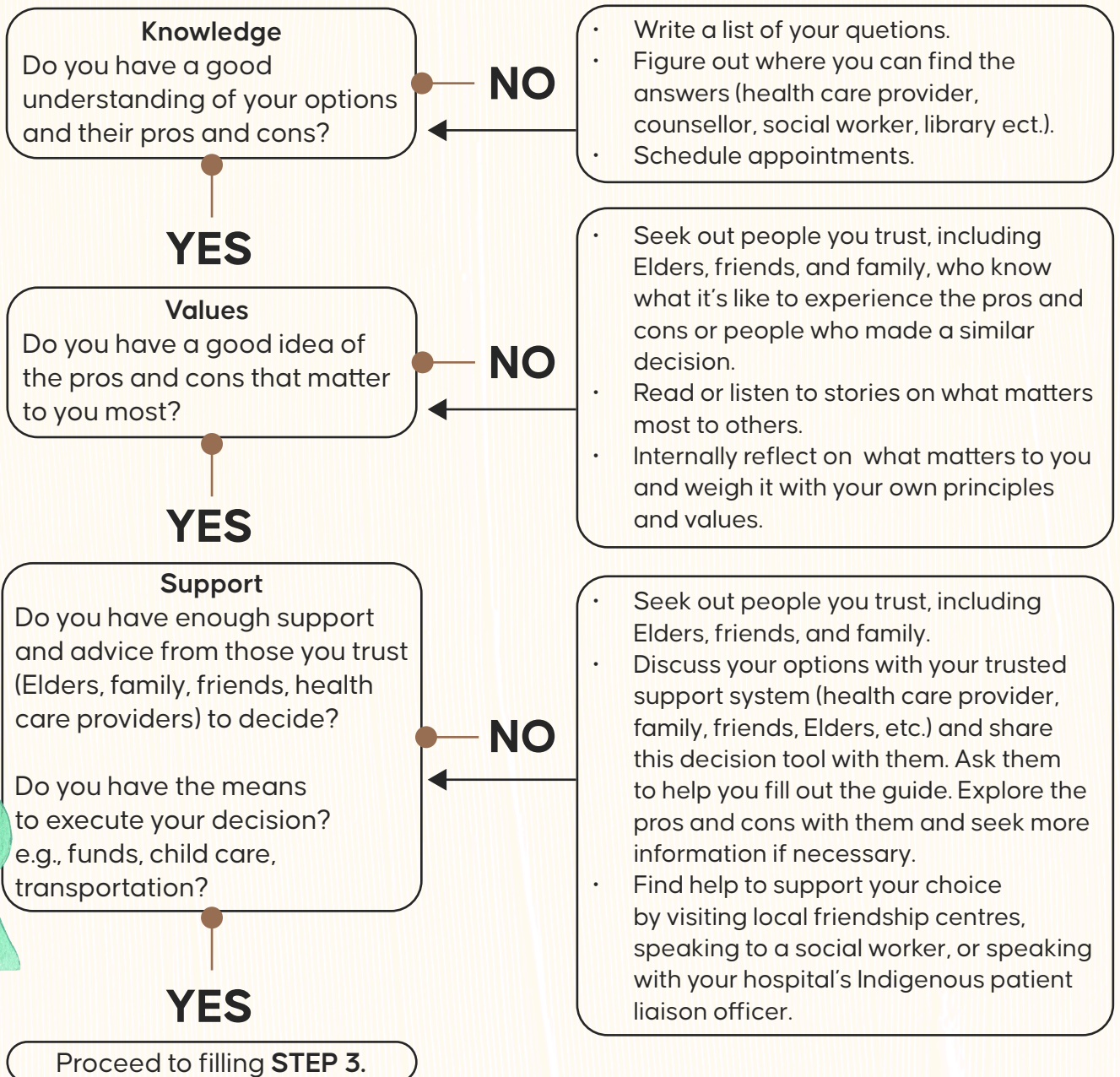
2. Bacciaglia, M., Neufeld, H. T., Neiterman, E., Krishnan, A., Johnston, S., and Wright, K. (2023). Indigenous maternal health and health services within Canada: a scoping review. *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth*, 23(1), 327



STEP 1 Define Your Decision

- a. **What is the decision?** E.g., which method of birth control should I use?
- b. **Think about your reasons behind making the decision.** E.g., family planning, a new relationship.
- c. **Is there a time you need to make your decision by?** E.g., next appointment, next month.

STEP 2 Identify Your Decision-Making Needs





STEP 3

Use Your Knowledge and Personal Values to Explore Your Choices

Options	Pros (reasons to choose)	Cons (reasons to avoid)	Overall Rating
Option 1:			
Option 2:			
Option 3:			
Option 4:			



STEP 4

*Based on Your Knowledge, Preferences, and Values,
Which Option Will You Choose?*



Option 1.

Option 2.

Option 3.

Option 4.

Certainty
Do you feel sure that this is the
best choice for you?

NO

- Work through steps 2 and 3 again, focusing on your needs, preferences, and values.
- Consider other factors that make this decision difficult.
- List anything else you can try.

YES

Proceed with a decision.

