

Introducing the Substitute Decision Maker

Your Conversation Checklist

- Ensure they have an accurate understanding of who their Substitute Decision Maker (SDM(s)) will be
- Review the qualities that make a good SDM
- If the patient is concerned that their default SDM(s) might not be right for the role, talk to them about the process of appointing an Attorney for Personal Care.

Opening Lines

Have you ever thought about...

- Who you would like to speak for you when you cannot speak for yourself?
- Who would make health care decisions for you if you were too sick or hurt to speak for yourself?
- If you were to get very sick and could not speak for yourself, who you would trust to make medical decisions for you?
- Who would be the best person to make decisions on your behalf?
- If something should happen to you and you were unable to talk for yourself, who you would want me to speak to, to make decisions on your behalf?

Qualities & Traits of an SDM

Your SDM may be asked to make important decisions about your healthcare...

- Would they be willing to make decisions on your behalf if you are too sick to do so?
- Are they willing to interpret, honour and follow your wishes as much as possible in the situation?
- Would they be willing to make themselves available to the healthcare team?
- Are they willing to talk with you to understand your wishes, values and beliefs?
- Are they able to communicate clearly?
- Are they be able to make difficult decisions in stressful situations?
- Would they be willing to ask questions and talk to your healthcare team?
- Will the person be okay making decisions on your behalf even if their own wishes are different from you

Hierarchy of Substitute Decision Makers

