

It's worth the shot

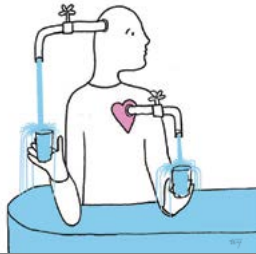
A brief intervention for
Primary Health Networks to
encourage COVID-19 vaccination



Decision cards *(available to download here)*

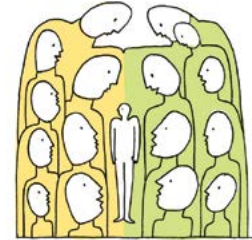
This whole COVID-19 thing...
It's so draining.

What's stopping me?
It's worth the shot.



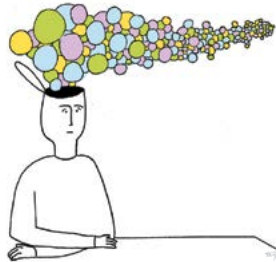
I feel caught in the middle.
Everyone has strong opinions, except me.

What's stopping me?
It's worth the shot.



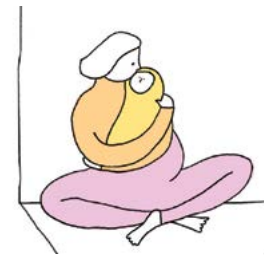
I'm confused.
I don't want to make the wrong decision.

What's stopping me?
It's worth the shot.



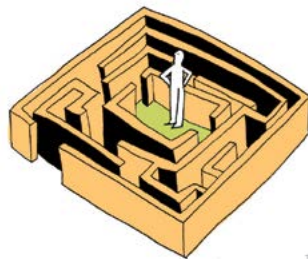
Should I or shouldn't I?
When it's not just about me.

What's stopping me?
It's worth the shot.



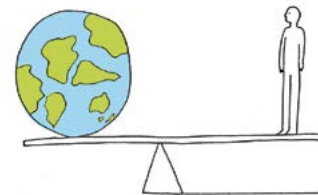
I feel cornered.
My job's at stake.

What's stopping me?
It's worth the shot.



What's the point?
I'm only one person anyway.

What's stopping me?
It's worth the shot.



What's next for me?
I'm ready for the next step.

What's stopping me?
It's worth the shot.



We're staying one step ahead.
It's our turn for a boost.

Feeling safe.
It's worth the shot.



Onwards and upwards.
It's my turn.

Don't miss out.
It's worth the shot.



Open the door.
It's their turn.

The magic of a child's world. It's worth the shot.



How do I use the cards?

Shared decision-making starts with a conversation to understand what’s important to the person in front of you and their understanding of the risks and benefits of COVID-19 vaccination.

Nudging people along

Consider a nudge at every touch point (see *flow chart in Key Strategies: Nudging on page 10*)

- > Every encounter with a practice or a patient offers an opportunity to provide a nudge
- > Support practices to identify how different members of the team may use ‘nudges’, eg:
 - Receptionist can ask patients about COVID-19 vaccination when they call about other matters and offer an appointment. eg “We’re offering appointments for COVID-19 vaccinations. Would you like more information?”
- > Collate scripts that different practices are using that resonate and have utility. Share between practices
- > Encourage clinicians to ask patients about COVID-19 vaccination whenever they present for a consultation

Before you start

Check out the 2 sets of cards

Familiarise yourself with their intent and messages

Watch the training video

Have the 2 sets of cards at hand

Step 1:

ASSESS

Set out DECISION cards ([available to download here](#))

(Using all the cards at once may be too overwhelming and too lengthy in a short timeframe. If time is limited signpost them to the website or, if available, give them a set of cards and arrange a follow up appointment.)

- > Who have you got in front of you? Put yourself in their shoes
- > Ask yourself what might be their top of mind issue around vaccination
- > Ask the person to look at the DECISION cards and pick the one(s) that most closely describe how they feel about making a decision about COVID-19 vaccination

- > Ask them what they see in the cards and which ones suit them best
- > Once the person has picked the cards you can then follow up with open questions such as:
 - “So, is that how you are feeling too?”
 - “Can you tell me about that?”
 - “What can I help you with?”

ADVISE & ACT

- > Concerns will naturally float to the top
- > Acknowledge and affirm their concerns and their thinking about how to move forward
- > Offer guided information to alleviate fears and remind them of the benefits of vaccination

Step 2:

Now set out the BENEFITS CARDS ([available to download here](#))

(Using all the cards at once may be too overwhelming and too lengthy in a short timeframe. If time is limited signpost them to the website or, if available, give them a set of cards and arrange a follow up appointment.)

ASSESS

- > Look at these cards together and put them in order of the benefits that are most important to the person

ADVISE & ACT

- > As you are doing this, have conversations about each of the benefits
- > Have supplementary information to hand about the benefits and risks¹

By the end of your brief conversation and exploration of the cards, we hope the person in front of you will have moved closer to a decision around vaccination.

If available, offer the person a set of cards to take away to think further and share with friends.

1. <https://www.immunisationcoalition.org.au/resources/corical/>
<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/covid-19-vaccinations-handling-consent-refusal-by-people-presenting-for-vaccination>
<https://www.science.org.au/education/immunisation-climate-change-genetic-modification/science-immunisation>

Supporting information for Primary Health Networks

Making the most of your brief intervention

Personal skills

Develop a rapport

- > Developing trust and empathy is an important part of effective communication particularly for health-related issues where people may have uncertainty
- > Use a private space or consulting room to have more detailed discussion about vaccination
- > Show acceptance
 - Acceptance is not the same as agreement. Acceptance is to accept non-judgementally what the person says and respect what they believe to be true

Demonstrate empathy

- > Pay attention to non-verbal aspects of communication e.g. maintain eye contact
- > Active listening (see below)
- > Acknowledge and respond to emotions e.g. *"You seem to be uncertain and anxious about vaccination. What can we do to help?"*

Be curious and encourage conversation

- > Make the person feel heard and valued. This leads in turn to an informed decision
- > When discussing vaccination with more than one person, ask the more vulnerable person their opinion first (e.g. ask the child before the parent)
- > If further information is needed (e.g. discussion with the GP) then try and do it whilst the person is present, so as not to lose the opportunity

Ensure effective communication skills

- > Check out existing levels of awareness and literacy
- > What’s important to them: what matters to them when making a decision?
- > Use open questions:
 - How far along are you in making a choice?
 - Tell me what you know about the benefits of having COVID-19 vaccination?
 - Tell me what you know about the risks of having a COVID-19 vaccination?
 - Which benefits are the most important to you?
 - Which risks cause you the most concern?
 - Who else is involved in making the decision?
 - Do you have enough information to help you make a decision? What additional information would help you to make a decision?

Offering information

- > Provide just the right amount of information to allow the person to decide
- > Too much information can be overwhelming and not enough information may be a barrier to decision-making
- > Provide the information as part of a guided conversation
- > Use a ‘just in time’ approach – as questions arise in the mind of the person, support their decision-making
- > Active listening is critical
- > Encourage talk by using techniques such as echoing and prompts such as ‘uh huh’
- > Paraphrase e.g. *“So your concern is mostly about the potential long term side effects about vaccination?”*
- > Summarise e.g. *“So I think I’ve heard you say that you would be prepared to consider COVID-19 vaccination for your son, if you could be reassured about the potential cardiac side-effects. You’re particularly worried about this because he had a heart murmur as a newborn.”*

Language is important

- > Use simple language
- > Make sure information and handouts also use clear simple language
- > Consider available CALD resources relevant to the person’s needs

Framing your messages

- > Frame messages in a way that implies ownership e.g. *“we have received stock of the Booster vaccine for COVID-19 and we can allocate you a dose now”*

Getting Information across

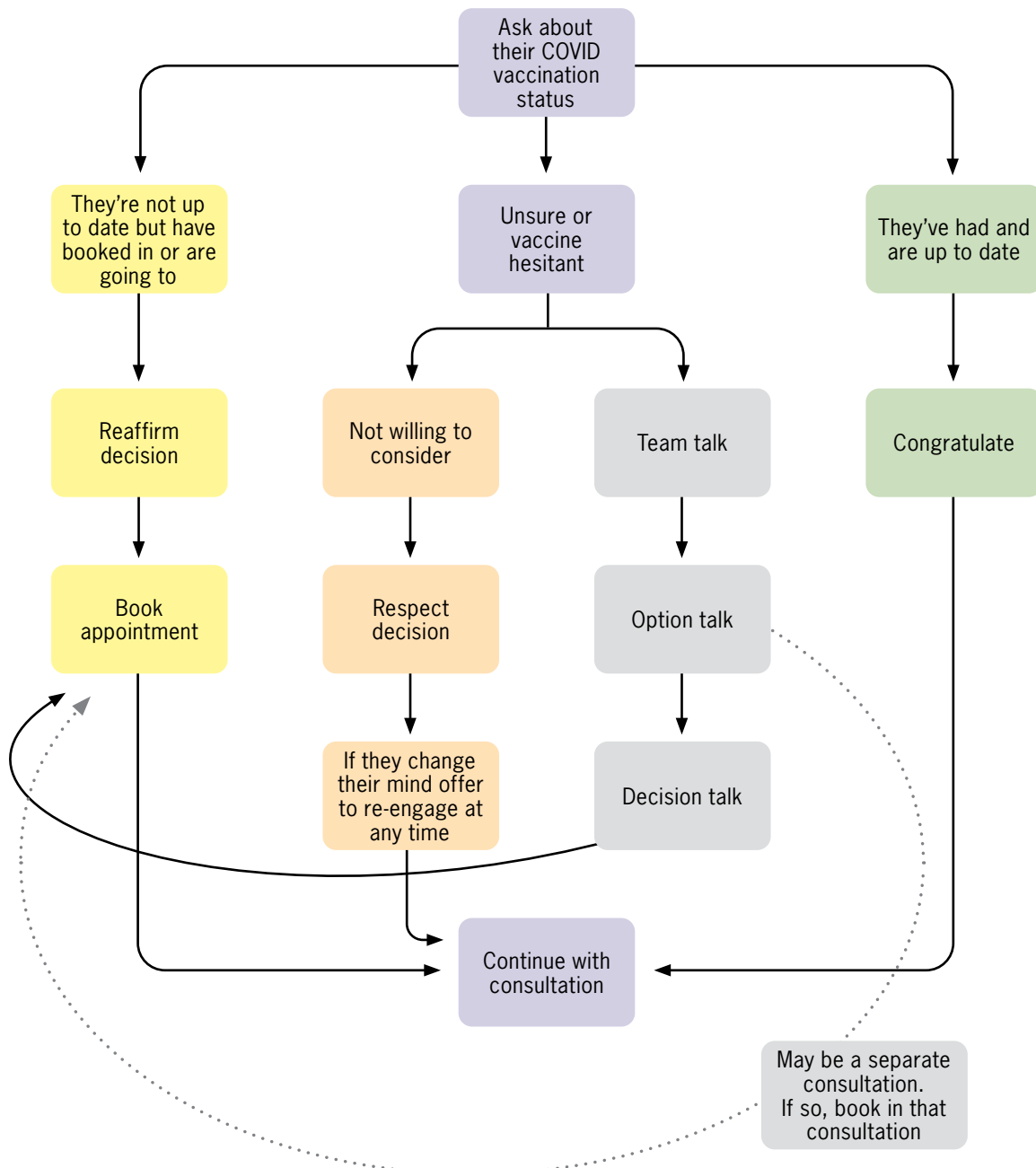
- > Provide information (rather than advice) to build on the person’s existing knowledge and on their strengths, balancing factual information with their personal values. e.g. *“It’s great that you are looking at all the different website and social media for information about the vaccine. Tell me what information is important for you and we can go to a trusted source and see what they say.”*
- > Maintain a list of approved/quality websites that you can refer people to (your PHN may be able to assist)
- > Use decision-making tools to support information provision

Key Strategies**Brief intervention**

A brief intervention describes practices that aim to identify opportunities to improve health and motivate an individual to act on the opportunity. They are often used for alcohol and other drug related issues. The intervention is short and personalised and is often undertaken in a structured and systematic way into routine clinical practice. The 3A’s approach to ASK, ADVISE and ACT in a simple brief intervention that may be familiar to many people working in primary care. The Tip Sheet at the beginning of this document shows you how to use this approach using IWTS resources.

Nudging

Nudges are interventions that modify the person’s behaviour in a predictable way and without forbidding any options. Nudging has been shown to be effective in the context of various health promotion strategies.



Adapted from Smoking Cessation Advice: Healthcare Professional Training, EU smoking cessation programme 2021

Shared decision-making

Shared decision making brings together evidence-based medicine with the person’s preferences into a process where the clinician and the person (and their family/carer) make the decision about vaccination together. It offers an opportunity to have a dialogue about risks and benefits of vaccination and taking into account the person’s values, preferences and circumstances. It has relevance in the context of vaccine hesitancy.

There is no one way to undertake shared decision-making. It can be considered in three parts:

1. Team talk
 - Acknowledge that a choice exists and that they will be supported in making that choice
 - For COVID-19 vaccination, the first choice is whether to have the vaccination or not; for some people a second choice is which vaccine they have
 - Understand what matters to the person
 - Discuss the risk and benefits in the context of the person’s values and preferences
 - Provide the right amount of information based on the person’s prior knowledge and level of understanding
2. Option talk
 - Discuss the risk and benefits in the context of the person’s values and preferences
 - Provide the right amount of information based on the person’s prior knowledge and level of understanding
3. Decision Talk
 - Decision talk aims to get to a preference-based decision
 - Decision aids are helpful for those who are displaying some vaccine hesitancy. The IWTS BENEFIT and DECISION cards are useful aids ([*available to download here*](#))

Team Based Approach

- > Work with the practices and pharmacies to help them use the whole team for this initiative in a way similar to other programs e.g. chronic disease management and quality improvement
- > Encourage the practice and pharmacy to have a team meeting and together run through all the resources and principles of IWTS. The team meeting could be an agenda item on existing meetings

- > Encourage the practice/pharmacy to consider roles for different members of the team, eg:
 - can the practice nurse check Australian Immunisation Register?
 - can the receptionist help by asking patients who phone for non-appointment queries by also offering COVID vaccination appointment?
 - can the practice manager undertake clinical system data searches of those who are eligible for COVID-19 vaccination to send targeted messages to unvaccinated patients?
- > Provide practices with support on digital health to ensure all their clinical team members can access the Australian Immunisation Register and/or My Health Record
- > Provide practices with ‘recipes’ to identify cohort of patients who would benefit from vaccination and who don’t have a record of the vaccination
- > Discuss how the pharmacy sales staff and other team members may ask nudging questions?
- > Support the pharmacy technician or other team member to identify people on high-risk medications
- > Support practices and nearby pharmacies to work more collaboratively by inviting to joint meetings or training
- > Support the practices/pharmacies to consider how these interventions can best be facilitated and achieve the desired outcomes as a part of the team’s regular workflow
- > Advise practices and pharmacies to scale expectations up or down each day with considerations of available staff, competing demands and energy levels. Be realistic
- > Advise practices and pharmacies to share and celebrate your team’s success. Every intervention is a chance to support consumers in making the best, informed decision

Recall and reminder systems

- > One of the most effective nudges is utilising reminder and recall systems²
- > Support practices and pharmacies to identify cohorts of patients to proactively contact. As vaccination rates in the locality increase these cohorts can be narrowed by identifying those who do not have a COVID vaccination recorded or have an incomplete course

2. https://www.pencs.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/20200323_COVID-19_RecipeBooklet_GeneralPractice_CATPlus_.pdf

- > Support practices and pharmacies to write effective messaging eg:
 - For written material use the tips provided above on language and framing
 - Incorporate strategies to make it easier for people to undertake the desired action – if sending an email or SMS reminder then provide a link to your online booking system for COVID vaccination
 - If there’s no response to the first reminder send a second reminder



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