

Growing Up With Support

Protecting dignity, privacy and choice through puberty and adolescence.

Support that worked well in childhood may not automatically feel right during adolescence. Bodies change. Privacy needs change. Preferences change. What feels comfortable one year may not feel comfortable the next.

This reflection can help you check whether support is still respectful, appropriate and aligned with who the young person is becoming.



Growing up can change what support feels right.

Has the support grown with the young person?

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Does the young person still feel comfortable with who provides their support?

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Has a previously ordinary task become more private?

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Are they being given enough privacy from peers?

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Have pain, fatigue or personal-care needs changed?

☐

Are adults assuming that being older means needing less help?

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Are support arrangements being discussed with the young person, rather than only around them?

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Do they know what will happen if they need additional help?



LOOK AGAIN

What has changed for the young person—even if their disability has not?

Growing older should change the conversation—not automatically remove the support.

Independence, Privacy or Support?

♥

Growing older does not make every support need disappear.

As young people grow, the support they need may be the same, but the way it is provided may need to change. Before making assumptions, pause and consider what the young person actually needs.

	INSTEAD OF ASSUMING... “They’re old enough to do this themselves.”	→	CONSIDER... Is the task physically or practically accessible to them?	
	INSTEAD OF ASSUMING... “We’ve always supported them this way.”	→	CONSIDER... Are they still comfortable receiving support this way?	
	INSTEAD OF ASSUMING... “They need help, so staff need to know.”	→	CONSIDER... Who actually needs this information?	
	INSTEAD OF ASSUMING... “They haven’t complained.”	→	CONSIDER... Have they been given a private and safe opportunity to say how they feel?	



INDEPENDENCE CAN INCLUDE SUPPORT

Independence is not the absence of help. It can also mean having greater control over:



what help is provided



how it is provided



who provides it



what information is shared

More independence can sometimes mean more control over support—not less support.

A Conversation With the Young Person



Their support should include their voice.

Their support should include their voice.

These questions can be adapted to the young person’s age, communication style and preferred way of expressing themselves.



PRIVACY & COMFORT

- Is there anything about your support that feels different now?
- Is there anything you would like more privacy with?
- Are you comfortable with who helps you?
- Where would you prefer personal conversations to happen?



CHOICE & SUPPORT

- Is there something you would like to try doing yourself?
- Is there something you’re expected to do yourself that you still need help with?
- Who are you comfortable knowing about your personal-care needs?



WHEN THINGS CHANGE

- What should happen if you need help and your usual support person isn’t available?
- Is there anything adults do to help that makes you uncomfortable or embarrassed?
- What would make school easier at the moment?



REMEMBER

This is not a one-time conversation.
What feels comfortable at 11 may not feel comfortable at 13 or 16.



Before assuming a young person needs more independence, ask whether what they actually need is **more choice**.



*Support should grow with the young person—
not simply expect them to grow out of it.*